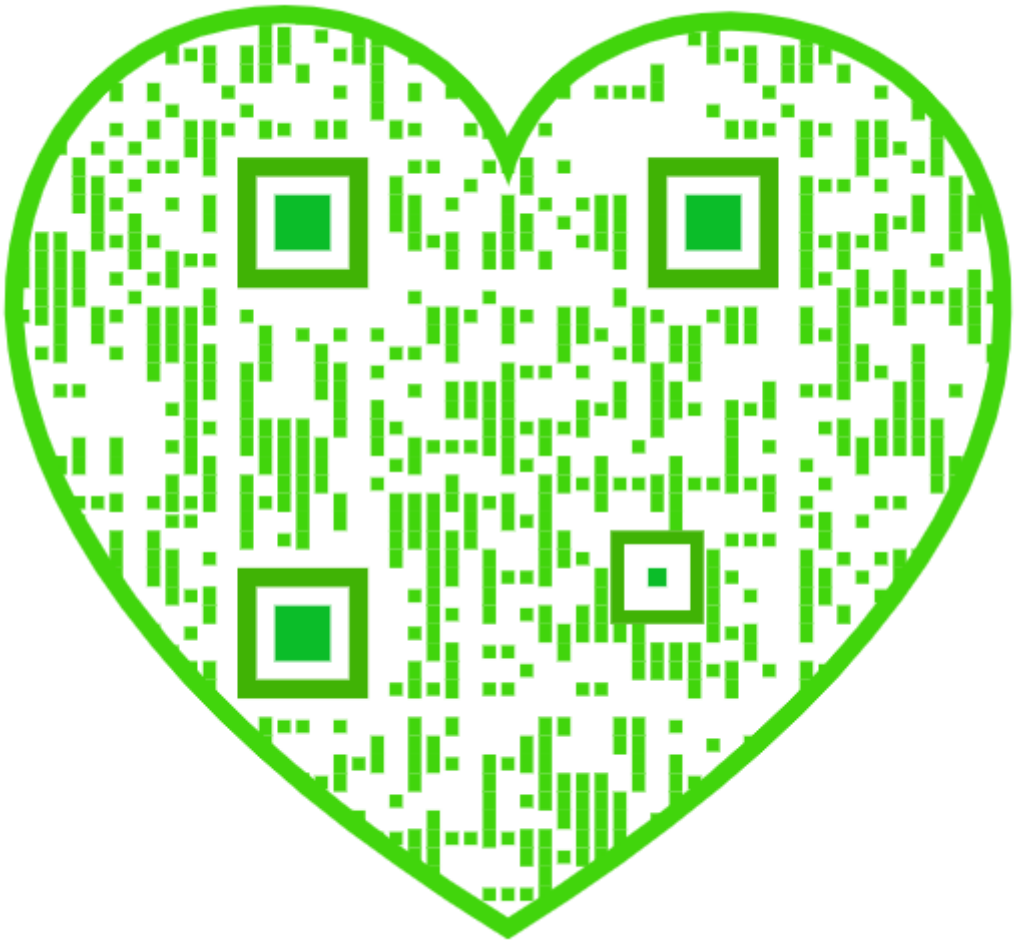

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NEW YORK LONDON

THE ART OF LIFE

BY

R. DE MAULDE LA CLAVIÈRE

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE HERBERT ELY

"A wise woman is a gift of the Lord"
ECCLESIASTICUS

NEW YORK
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To

Madame la Duchesse d'Ursel

(*née Mun*)

Madam,

Here is a little book, historical rather than philosophical. It has often happened that people disillusionised of life have steadfastly resolved henceforth to see it only through the prism of beautiful things, and to content themselves with gathering as much as possible of its flower.

That, in the main, is the idea that I have tried to develop, and to adapt to the present time.

This unpretentious volume calls for no long dedication; yet suffer me to offer it you in all simplicity, in memory of our grave talks at Mont Dore, of which you will here and there, perhaps, light upon some trace.

R. M.

I desire to thank Mr. Henry Newbolt for permission to reprint those pages of this book which first appeared, tentatively, in the MONTHLY REVIEW. *And to record my obligation to my friends Colonel H. A. Ker and Mr. David Frew for much useful criticism and suggestion; to Mr. Frew also for carefully collating the whole book with the original text; and especially to Mr. Walter Herries Pollock, who generously allowed me to consult him on certain points, to the great advantage of my rendering.*

G. H. E.

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PART THE FIRST

THE LOWER LIFE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

A DOUBLE CARNATION

"Bien lire l'univers, c'est lire la vie.
Le monde est l'œuvre où rien ne meurt et ne dévie,
Et dont les mots sacrés répandent de l'encens.
L'homme injuste est celui qui fait des contresens.
On voit les champs, mais c'est de Dieu qu'on s'éblouit."—V. HUGO.

"L'univers tout entier réfléchit ton image,
Et mon âme, à son tour, réfléchit l'univers."[1]
—LAMARTINE.

BY Art I mean the cult of the Beautiful, provoking sympathy and love.

Beauty! Does it play in our life a necessary part?

We need but open our eyes to see things of beauty around us, and to perceive in beauty the fulfilment of the law of their being.

Nature is a great artist, who reveals to us the

[1] [Rightly to read the universe is reading life. The world's a book in which there is neither death nor error; whose hallowed words diffuse a perfume. The unrighteous man is he who reads amiss. We see the fields, but it is with God our eyes dazzle.

The whole wide universe reflects thy image, and my soul in its turn reflects the universe.]

true way of life; her method is selection, and beauty her goal. In the neighbourhood of Mont Dore, for example, you walk on delicious carpets of pansies, yellow asters, thyme, carnations, flowers innumerable. Herein is Nature's art. Month after month she has gathered her forces, germinated, toiled, analysed, wrought miracles in physics and chemistry, to arrive at this result—a flower.

She is all beauty. How she belies the thesis of her undisciplined lovers, to whose imagination she is all violence, and wildness, and horror!—who would fain set up a precipice in their drawing-room!

She smiles, looking for a higher life.

These pink carnations are all alike: blessings on the man, he too an artist, who lays a compelling hand on them, to assort them, and bring them to a higher perfection still!

Transformed from a single to a double blossom by a new culture, the carnation typifies what has been well called "the fruitage of legitimate desires," in other words, progress.

Winsome flower, in this little nosegay composed so daintily, so thoughtfully, radiant in thy many-coloured comeliness! Assuredly a handful of herbs culled at random could never please so well. This posy gives me an idea of perfection.

At the point where thy normal life was stayed,

a superior hand took seisin of thee, to continue the movement, and raise thee above thyself. Now thou hast a healthy flower, a fragrant flesh, many and various hues — pure, gay, bright, living: a feast for mortal eyes. Nay more, thou art my friend, dost clasp and hold me with thy exquisite perfume. What didst thou on those heights, in single scentlessness? Thou wert wont to give me nothing: thee I could but contemplate, or crush under my feet; whereas flowers of subtle scent are fays who know our need of tenderness, and faith, and intimate fellowship above all, and who seek us out and penetrate our being. This carnation fills my room; good it is, and beautiful. I love it as a dear friend.

By like laws is the whole world governed; for flower and animal and man alike the rules are one, differing solely in their mode of operation. Hence this modest flower is a perfect index of the course we should pursue. It has passed through the three great stages we discern in every life-history. First, the stage of law: born in humility, its growth was painful; secondly, the stage of beauty: it developed, put forth its blossom, multiplied its seed; lastly, it gave birth to a higher life, whence its double form, its wealth of colour, its sweet scent.

So should the art of our life be also: to draw

from ourselves all that we are capable of yielding, to set in motion all our elements of vitality, to blossom to the full.

There are people who out of good itself evolve evil : set them in a garden of roses, they will find it a mere wilderness of thorns. The art of life consists, not in forcing or colouring or adapting life, but in the ability from its very evil to bring forth good. The whole problem is to grow double carnations instead of single, for the sweetening of our existence. This problem you may solve, if you will.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE HARD LIFE

> "All men have but one yearning in common: the yearning for life and happiness. In this lies the actual bond linking all men together."—RICHARD WAGNER.

LIFE is hard at bottom. If perchance you yourself have not suffered, go into the slums of your city and see the human animal; contemplating those wan, grave faces, with their look of utter weariness and woe, you will understand how life is built up, what a hot-bed of misery and squalor helps to root us in the earth. Our life emanates from death. Life kills.

This primal rigour is due to the urgent need of food and clothing and shelter. We are all cradled between ox and ass; every living creature has its origin in animality; life, compact of instinct and energy, resists the tempest by means of the firmness of its roots, and by its very ruggedness—but does the oak leap exultant as he withstands the blast?

Many a time we hear our poets belauding the

earth, her alleged tractableness, her smiles: 'tis rhyme without reason! The man of the fields, living in close contact with the primal struggle, is persistently prosaic. Your guide, your cicerone, will admire the beauty of things; the crowd will have no inkling of it; to them a rock is a mass of stone, a cloud is wetness. Their only touch of art is a somewhat fatalistic philosophy. They do not exult in intellectual activity or self-analysis; don't ask them if the eye consists of well-drilled microbes, or if man is a bundle of efforts towards a higher life. They see and act; that is enough for them; and reflexion itself, with them, sometimes does instinct a disservice, just as, though to spell correctly becomes in general an automatic process, yet, if we pause at a word and reflect, we are at a loss how to write it.

The stress of life produces strength, endurance, fretfulness, boredom, a stunted spiritual life—for the trees that shoot up most loftily into the heavens are slender of stem. It hardens the skin; and certainly we can only look with respectful admiration at men who have reached a stage of endurance where a blow is preferable to a caress. I know nothing so genuinely beautiful as the lives of certain women, who devote themselves to husband and children with a self-sacrifice, a courage, and a silence beyond praise. Monetary worries,

children's ailments, husband's vices—all are powerless to crush their spirit. And in all this there is a beauty so real that heroic and lofty natures have sometimes succumbed to its fascination, and found happiness in the sacred madness of self-immolation. History shows us enthusiasms of this kind pushed to a very sublimity of frenzy.

And yet present trials can only be truly loved so far as they intensify the desire or hope for future happiness. In this regard the rigour of life is precious, a deep fountain of delights; it quickens our aptitude for joy. Assuredly it is right to inure your children to hardship, so that one day they may be healthy and happy, and bless you in their hearts! But while we ought not to shrink from the inevitable rudenesses of life, still less ought we to brood upon them, and let the harsh aspects of existence monopolise our thoughts. The life that is really hard is the life of gloom. And sorrow springs more often from the way we take things than from the things themselves.

Be strong, then, to throw off the strain and stress! Do not go open-armed to meet misfortune, or aggravate it by imaginary woes. Be resolute to nourish life into bloom. Take pity upon yourselves, and begin by bidding sorrow avaunt.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

OF RESTLESSNESS

> "In man's life there are but three incidents: birth, life, death. Of his birth he knows nothing; to die is agony; and life he forgets."—La Bruyère.
>
> "I said then to myself: Imagine that you have obtained all that you can wish for in this life; imagine that you can accomplish in an instant all the changes in institutions and opinions that you are ambitious to bring about: would this be great joy and happiness to you? And a voice in my conscience that nothing could stifle made answer: No."—John Stuart Mill.

Many people think that life cannot be filled better than by dint of excitements. Tell me frankly, does this lend charm to life? Life is what it is; why should we kill ourselves in painting its stucco? It would often be doing us a service were some one to show us the ridiculous side of a crowd of obligations and ambitions in which we consume ourselves, vainly. To do this thing or that because "everybody does it," to know everybody, to catch the fleeting moment, to think everybody's thoughts, to see what every one sees, to eat the

fashionable kickshaws and suffer from the fashionable complaint, to reel under the prodigious exertion of doing nothing—truly a fine object in life, this: the life of a circus horse or a squirrel. The world will regard us with admiration, mayhap; but the physician before whom we presently collapse after our surfeit will treat us as degenerates.

He will tell us to quit Paris and fly to the sea or the mountains. Stuff! 'tis not the air of Paris that is unwholesome; what is unwholesome is its moral atmosphere. Still, I do find it a little hard to understand how a Parisian, constantly beset by risks so various, can reach manhood limb-whole, unmaimed. To be alive!—that is the marvel.

And many people, amid these futile activities, pass life by after all without touching it. *Who* they were is never known; you only see their gestures. In sooth, there must be many serious people among the clowns at the fair, judging by the number of clowns and fribbles among serious people.

Not a few of the grave men I happen to meet, lawyers, bankers, men of business, are not really men at all; they are merely lawyers, bankers, men of business. Is this happiness?

Mr. Rockefeller, the Oil King, has fallen into a

melancholy. Like Charles V, he desires to abdicate; but this dream is still to him a fresh source of trouble and sorrow, for he seeks a mortal of fit mould and temper to wield the sceptre in his stead, and, though he scours two hemispheres, this mortal is nowhere discoverable.

Will it astonish you, Madam, if I avouch that this rage of unrest has set its mark upon some of your sex? Would not you yourself think it a slight on your reputation if you were even suspected of being a stay-at-home? Conversation, writing —what outworn, antiquated things! You fling out your words, your notes, in the style of a tradesman's list or a telegram; you are seen in the paddock or the polo-field, on charitable committees, in presidential chairs; since man is master, you think you are winning a place among the engulfing sex by adopting mannish modes wholesale.

The most charming of women will cut, at best, but a poor figure as a man; and I cannot, in truth, see what there is in the spectacle of the masculine hurly-burly to attract women who might well live in quietness. To be endlessly getting and spending, to turn all things to laughter and take nothing seriously, to be altogether insensible—oh, a fine philosophy! With all his wealth and titles and decorations, many a man comes to crawling on

all fours, and even finds exceeding comfort in his proneness, like the good soul who, being changed into a hog by the enchantress Circe, refused point-blank to resume his former feature. But all our restless strivings represent in reality nothing but a varnish of egoism, wherefore we cannot desire a woman to take pleasure in them. Moreover, she would have to force her nature to attain an egoism so perfect. Such egoism is very rare among you, ladies; and often, after the loss of those you love has driven you within your last entrenchments, it happens that Death comes, rather than Forgetfulness.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

OF THE HAPPINESS OF DOING NOTHING

SHALL we at least find joy in the happiness of doing nothing ?

I recognise that, for some women, there is a measure of practical wisdom in remaining idle. Unaccustomed to anything that can be called work, constrained often to periods of real, enforced, idleness, they prefer to avoid all serious undertakings, lest their activity prove mere beating of the air.

This attitude of mind is familiar to many men also, if they have an income however small, or merely the hope of espousing one. They tell themselves that work brings worry, breeds jealousy and envy : ignorance has its art—the art of shining inexpensively ; and all you have to do for the applause you covet is to unveil a statue in honour of some philosopher comfortably dead and buried. Meanwhile, it is so pleasant a sensation, so conducive to the peace and order of your country, to smoke your cigar without one thought, one desire, one aspiration !

So pleasant! But stay, my dear sir, let me deal fairly with you: you are always doing something, even though it be only smoking, hunting, reading the newspaper, emitting your political views, riding, eating, digesting. Only, these occupations are useless to your neighbours. It is very lucky, you will admit, that all men do not profess the same principles of ideal parasitism, for then, who would give you to eat?

If we could but hug the assurance that wretchedness is the rightful heritage of the poor, and splendour the rightful heritage of the rich, we might beseech the poor to batten on the odours exhaled from your kitchens. But no: uselessness seeks to foist itself as a mark of distinction, and vanity, often more ravenous than hunger, excites violent social strictures, especially among workmen of some intelligence, and sufficiently well off already to have an inkling of what luxury means.

Unhappily, our progress in material things serves only to develop this sense of luxury, by establishing on all sides contacts purely material. Money, and money alone, classifies the passengers on the railway; we all become mere parcels, some in wadding, others not. We are estimated by the weight of our money, though that is commonly a cause of moral feebleness, or at least of sloth. Will social happiness, any more than personal

happiness, be found in this glorification of material indolence and the aristocracy of pleasure? It seems not, judging by the jealousy that devours our whole society, from top to bottom. There is endless talk of solidarity, fraternity: that is the court dress of the present day—not, as of old, wigs and knee-breeches. But never was egoism so intolerant; never, consequently, was the tedium of life so grievous.

Men mightily deceive themselves by indulging all their life long the dream of an easy time—retirement from business, quiet days of fishing, and so on; seeking a path to this happiness by way of a life of inelastic limitations. "I am not an utter fool," a Frenchman will tell you: "as you are aware, I am a decent fellow, though I say so—a public servant, naturally, like all Frenchmen—a good citizen, and a member of no end of societies—academies, too, I assure you. Among the Ministers I serve, at least one out of two seems an absolute ass. Oh, but I serve him! Simple obedience to rule makes you happy; that's the thing for peace and promotion. My wife is so devout that she positively does harm to religion; she is driving me to agnosticism; not that it really matters; indeed, I recognise that in my wife's piety there is a narrow, slavish, so to say utilitarian side, which it is well to inculcate

upon women, so as to silence argument and stifle thought. And as to work, and the money it brings in—well, I take just as much as I need. You can't imagine, dear fellow, how easy and familiar work becomes when you are used to it, and do it mechanically. It's like your morning tub—becomes a positive mania. When I am on holiday, getting a taste of Nature in my garden at Clamart, I feel quite lost, and have half a mind to go to the office. Still, I look forward with lively impatience to the goal of my life, the time for retiring. Talking of that, I quite envy the *far niente* of my neighbour, a decent little retired grocer. And, after all, not being miserly, thank Heaven, or stuck-up, I do feel that money is only a means; it's a good thing so far as it relieves us of exertion. For the most part, men only want to get rich out of sheer pride, just to have more than their neighbour. I myself have the sense to believe, like the English, that money becomes respectable when you begin to spend it. O the joy of doing nothing, and letting others slave for you!—the delights of taking it easy, loafing, lolling the time away! Governments could never give you too much encouragement. How easy they make it to govern a country, and what satisfaction they procure for the governed themselves!"

That is how most of us talk. Our life is either whirl or stagnation. To the women who do nothing, as well as to all these mechanical gentlemen, to those who are enamoured of the world, and to persons flourishing and waxing fat, may I present the woman of my dream? She has formed the habit of living so actively on the joys and sorrows of others; she has sustained, encouraged, helped others so often, shared so many fears and hopes, seen so much of birth and death, lived so full a life; that beneath her blanching hair her heart finds it impossible to retire from the service. It grows and grows. Her activity, always fruitful, brings forth ever more and more. A clear proof that there must be a special secret.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

WHERE SHALL WE SEEK THE ART OF LIFE?

> "I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit."—ECCLES. i. 17.
>
> "The beauty of all things, even to the meanest of the minerals, proclaims God."—ST. BONAVENTURE.

To Madame ———

MADAME,—Do you remember a walk (romantic, shall I call it?) we took one evening under a lovely iridescent sky? Here and there we saw a few human ants, so to speak; one man was pitting potatoes with his wife, another was collecting them from the field, a third was mowing, establishing with unvarying regularity of sweep a close-shorn equality around him. Earth, sky, the whole prospect was delightful; but we alone rejoiced in it; not one of those poor people so much as raised his eyes. That scene suggested to me the writing of this little book. For our natural development should only lead us to the enjoyment of beauty. As soon as a man has assured his life, he thinks of embellishing it; if he has no such thought, it is

because he still remains at the lower stage. So with societies : they know nothing of artistic evolution, but recognise only economic evolution ; and the movements to which the name 'renaissance' is given imply merely that a people has made its fortune, and is young enough to wish to enjoy it. Ring out the hour of work, ring in the hour of sensibility.

But how is the appeal to sensibility to be made ? We must love something, but what ?

Some one suggests a love for the intellect in its highest manifestation—science, to wit. But is that an infallible prescription for universal happiness ? In the first place, not every mortal man can love science : the world in general is concerned only with its practical results ; you expect the pear-tree to yield pears, medicine to cure you, and a train to make good running ; but did you ever fall in love with a tunnel or the permanent way ? Secondly, science, even when you love her, proves a somewhat ungrateful mistress ; she yields to you but grudgingly ; she solves one question only to propound another ; she offers a helping hand, but, having stated her problem, leaves you gaping for its solution. Work by no means spells happiness ; and in vaunting the joys of the intellectual life, in persuading ourselves that restlessness of mind will fill the heart, we are bound in the long run to sink

into "futility, uncertainty, and sorrow," as Pascal said. The elements of society that are purely sentimental and not scientific—family, marriage, fatherland—tend to disappear, and with what do we replace them? With nothing; as a matter of fact they are replaced by alcoholism, or what you will, for man must and will have his hours of dreaming!

Moralists, for their part, like M. Ollé-Laprune, confound the idea of beauty, not with the idea of work, but with the idea of virtue. Virtue, they declare, is beauty enough for them, and the consciousness of a duty fulfilled ought fully to appease our thirst for love. I am irresistibly reminded of the lament of an extremely ugly woman: "Women never get due credit for remaining virtuous."

I do not mean to say, of course, that evil is beautiful. Evil, in my belief, has no positive existence; it is a want of vitality, a warped vigour, a stunted growth, and consequently an anti-æsthetic fact. The Book of Genesis puts forward a magnificent thesis in this regard: God is the creator, not of evil, but of liberty. The first man was a rare, choice plant, living without effort in such ordered unvarying happiness as a vegetable may enjoy. Instead of this earthy joy, God in His compassion gives him a wife, work to do, and liberty to sin —in other words, the implements necessary for

securing a different kind of happiness, which otherwise he would never have known. Thus it may be said that the knowledge of good and evil is itself only a sort of science, a method, a means towards a higher life, not life itself. Nothing in itself is either good or bad: evil consists in the abuse, or the insufficient use, of things.

Between dignity and pride, love and lust, prudence and avarice, there is only a shade, depending on the nicest variation of mental bias. "David did evilly in desiring to drink water, Esau foolishly in eating lentils. But God permitteth Noah to eat of any beast that agreeth with his stomach,"—a sentence I have just unearthed in St. Augustine.

In a word, Madame, science (the science of ethics included) seems to me the skeleton or framework of life,—the stalk of the flower, the sketch for the picture, the grammar of the discourse, debentures as distinct from the dividend warrant. It is never anything but a groundwork or preparation. Mere reason pencils the sketch; some one must come and lay on the colours.

But who will this be? If the majority of us men are suffocating in our reason or unreason from lack of sensibility, may we not say that it is woman's part to widen our lives? Should we not be advancing if we journeyed towards the country of the heart?

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE NECESSARY COMMUNISM

"L'homme est un point qui vole avec deux ailes,
Dont l'une est la pensée et dont l'autre est
l'amour."[1]—VICTOR HUGO.

WE see the good and do it not, because we are unable to love it. Thus morality itself cannot justify its existence unless its final issue is beauty and love, as the flower is the consummation of the plant. Everything that is beautiful is true and moral, though everything that is true and moral is not beautiful. A beautiful building should be strong, but a strong building need not be beautiful. "To think is not to love, but to love is to think." Love is the sum of all. I may have been a respectable man—scholar, manufacturer, or idler at large; I may have penned most polished verses or painted most academic pictures; and so lived my life. But to be possessed by a noble sentiment, to extend my personality while apparently destroying it, to please my neighbour and love him as

[1] [Man is a point that flies with two wings: one is thought; the other, love.]

myself, to bestow my life on the outer world and from this outer world to extract a new life—here indeed is a novel state, this is true life!

True life!—for among us there is infinitely more love than justice. We are strongly moved by passion alone. The brain looks down from his lordly sceptical height upon our internal sensations, and, sorting them, takes note merely of the pains. Of what is going well he has never a word to say. On the other hand, a delicate and complicated apparatus is constantly receiving and transmitting to our nerve centres a host of external sensations, often hardly perceptible; it is perpetual hurry to and fro; and all this movement from without acts upon us like an incessant winding of a clock.

There are thus two men in us: the inner man, who digests, and the outer man who breathes the air and perceives external things; the analyst, and the compounder; or, to use another figure, the conveyancer or surveyor who proves our title, and the master of the house, who throws up its windows and makes it his home. The analytical spirit is the essence of the scientific spirit, and the synthetic spirit the substance of the æsthetic spirit.

Some people do not admit this duality, which it is so important to recognise, and on which the whole art of life is based. They say that the useful

becomes beautiful on ceasing to be useful; that love of the beautiful is born of superfluity, and constitutes a luxury. One might as well say that it is a luxury for a plant to bloom. An out-and-out utilitarian would be a monster, and an out-and-out sentimentalist a fool. I heartily agree with Taine's dictum that each of us has two dispositions, the one self-centred, the other beneficent.

According as the one or the other of these dispositions is the more strongly marked, a man, a woman, a society even, assumes an aspect of attraction or of repulsion. Sentiment, of course, may degenerate into abuse or weakness; but the civilised man is recognised by the predominance of sentiment over pure reason. This is what Jules Simon and Gambetta implicitly proclaimed when, on their accession to power, they advocated a republic of the amiable or Athenian species, which meant practically that hard logic had had its day, and sentiment had come by its own. In point of fact, the Christian nations cannot be led in these days without love. There is no more futile notion than that of an automatic government, a perfectly adjusted constitution, regulated like a cotton-mill. Man must have some craze or other: the good government is not the most talented, nor even the best, but that to which we are well disposed, and which makes us happy. Hence states-

men like Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Balfour, Leo XIII, have always maintained the necessity, amid the 'struggle for life,' of mixing the leaven of the ideal with our daily bread, which otherwise we should be unable to swallow.

So true is this that each of us does, in fact, import something of the ideal into his life, in his own fashion, at the cost of occasional blunders. The masses are doing so when they get drunk. Some of us fuddle our minds, in a large variety of ways. In one of his novels, M. Estaunié brings upon the scene an unfortunate tutor, dismissed without notice by the mother of a young dunderhead because his lessons, which certainly are labour lost, cost ten shillings apiece; as he meekly shuts the door behind him, the tutor is aware that the lady, without lifting an eyebrow, is paying five guineas for a false coiffure, which certainly has its uses. Thereupon he revolts and falls foul of society. Why? He has only himself to blame. Why does not he turn hairdresser, since 'tis an excellent trade, and, after all, conduces to the ideal as well as another? But no, the gentleman has an ideal of his own; and so have all of us. As Goethe says: "There is no subject but has its poetry." Leibnitz has well celebrated the beauty of geometry, Aristotle the beauty of mathematics.[1]

[1] Ricardo.

Pure science, in truth, may itself become an object of love to some rare minds of high distinction; but the majority of men, left to themselves, will fall in love with what they chance upon by the way. One of the most honourable of Parisian bankers lately told me, with no little pride, that he had succeeded in inspiring such belief in his finesse that, the moment he advised the sale of a security, his clients immediately bought. I am pretty sure that our friends the burglars and assassins must appreciate, in their several arts, a neat haul, a fine murder.

So it is with our society: it must have a passion of some sort—hatred of the English, love for gold-mines; but it does not always choose wisely.

A thirsty man is well disposed to the brewer; but if the waiter, instead of bringing him drink, said to him, "Excuse me, sir, while I explain how they grow the hops or prime the beer," he would exclaim, "Oh, come now, I am thirsty; that's no business of mine!"

There is, then, a genuine art, which consists in presenting us with beautiful things perfect and complete, worthy of our love; because we need them, but have neither the time nor the taste to seek or choose them ourselves. A society in which the religion of beauty does not exist is foredoomed to anarchy; every man goes his own gait; it is as

though you were to amass unsigned bank-notes, or to leave ripe fruits to moulder. Whatever Tolstoy may say, not everything is beautiful or worthy of love; and the supreme, the culminating art, the art of showing forth beauty and prophesying love, is in every sense the art of an elect few; it is the gift by which men recognise what may be truly called an aristocracy.

"Au-dessus de la haine immense, quelqu'un aime." [1]

"The greatest of these is Charity."

To institute, high above our self-seeking society, a government based on love, gentleness, benignity—distilling calmness, justice, and union, the refreshing dew of courtesy and grace—this is the great work to undertake.

Self-interest, intelligence, analysis, keep men and things apart. Keats humorously said that he owed Newton a grudge for destroying the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours.[2] Society is cemented by love. Self-interest demands tyranny; love invokes liberty, for no tie is stronger than a common love; and, instead of pitting individual dissimilarities against one another, or

[1] Victor Hugo. [Above the immense hatred, some one is loving.]

[2] See Mr. W. H. Mallock's remarkable book, "Is Life Worth Living?" [But the humour was Charles Lamb's: see the account in Haydon's diary (quoted in Canon Ainger's *Life*) of the meeting in his study, at which Lamb proposed Newton's health "and confusion to mathematics."]

endeavouring to suppress them, or teaching us to shut our eyes to them, love imbues them with the consciousness of completing each other. As in society, so in the individual, whether regarded as a moral or a physical being, beauty represents the synthesis of life. The beautiful man is the man of perfect vitality.[1]

A society is beautiful if, instead of anarchy in tastes and ideas, it establishes a unity of sympathy and affection—if it adds to its capacity for repression the capacity to love.

Science creates individual property, necessary in regard to material things, which cannot be distributed without being taken from one person to

[1] M. Jules Lemaître enforced this truth in admirable words at a meeting held in Paris by the 'Œuvre des Faubourgs' [a sort of Oxford House]: "Your faith has this social advantage over others, that it puts you on the same level with those to whom you extend a helping hand, and that your piety spontaneously establishes between the poor and yourselves that equality of which we hear so much, but which does not exist in nature, and is practically non-existent in law, though attempts have been made to introduce it into the latter.

"I have said that a second fruit of your religious belief is a perfect tolerance. While our municipal philanthropy refuses its assistance to little children of the poor whose parents have not consulted them on the choice of a school, you succour the needy without inquiring what is their religion, or even whether they so much as have one.

"You know too well the preciousness of immortal souls not to respect their freedom. Your religious faith implies belief in free will, and consequently the conviction that no action is valid if it be not free. You know that every religious act performed without sincerity, induced by self-interest or fear, degrades the doer of it; and it is your wish and purpose to elevate your needy friends."

give to another, and without being diminished themselves. But the soul grows larger by participation; the more widely it distributes itself, the more strength and amplitude it acquires; the gift of the soul infringes no rights, but the reverse. And therefore, love raising us above ourselves, beauty tends to create the necessary communism, the communism of souls.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE REDEEMING SENTIMENT

" La haine en moi va germer ;
Dois-je rire ou blasphémer ?
Et l'écho m'a dit : Aimer.

" Comme l'écho des grands bois
Me conseilla de le faire,
J'aime, je chante et je crois.
...Et je suis heureux sur terre ! "[1]

—THÉODORE BOTREL.

"Take away love, and you suppress all the passions. Establish love, and you bring them all to birth."—BOSSUET.

"'And yet am I still persuaded,' said Parlamente, 'that man will never love God perfectly until he has perfectly loved some creature of His in this world.'"—THE HEPTAMERON.

To ourselves, love brings redemption. Imagine a being who lacks nothing, spared the assaults of universal envy, ministered unto before ever he opens his lips : without love, all this is as nothing. What redeems us is the quickening sentiment by

[1] [Hatred is springing up in me : shall I laugh or blaspheme? Echo answers—Love. Obedient to the counsel of the great woods' echo, I love, and sing, and believe, and am happy on earth.]

which we learn to love existence instead of resigning ourselves to it, and which, taking us out of ourselves, reconciles us with life universal—with the future life as with the past.

People bent only on pleasure will never understand the worth of love ; but with those who are in quest of happiness the case is otherwise.

It is an essential law of our nature that every sensation strikes a chord in us, creates an image, the image resolving itself into an idea, and the idea into an emotion. Our physical sensibility is, as it were, a network of telegraph wires : the intellect reads the telegram and forwards it to the moral sense, which is final arbiter and executive authority.

Without dwelling on these primordial problems, we may remark, nevertheless, that our moral sensibility increases in direct proportion to our intellectual development, and almost inversely to our physical sensibility. It is a known fact, for instance, that the dumb animals are superior to us in the sense of smell, and that savages retain powers of which civilisation has robbed us ; though, to redress the balance, we have the control of steam and electricity, which more than compensate for our losses. Intelligence thus raises us to a higher sensibility, quick and delicate ; and, here, art consists in employing emotions of sense as little as possible,

and relegating them to the background. Where the realists so grossly err is in reserving the word 'real' for material sensations, whilst our thinking faculty, our moral consciousness, the realest things in the world, are constantly growing, elevating themselves, so to speak, by a sort of law, almost mechanical, and at all events inevitable.[1] Sensation remains, of course, the starting-point, and the more active it is, the more rapidly is the æsthetic ascent effected.[2] But it has no other function.

How is this mechanism to be explained? How does a physical excitation come to produce this intellectual state which otherwise would not be produced? We cannot tell. The relations between spirit and matter are full of these enthralling mysteries.

We live in the midst of a prodigality of life, among myriads of vital germs, sterile seeds, microbes, unseen forms of life. Likewise, innumerable sensations, internal, external, claim our attention every moment; very few really move us.

A sensation that, so far as I am concerned, passes unnoticed, acts energetically upon my neighbour; a shock that leaves me unmoved will make him happy or unhappy, give him sickness or health. Joys and griefs float innumerable about us. How many germs of joy settle upon us with-

[1] Ricardo. [2] Ribot.

out our knowledge, inhaled by us, assimilated to our life, in utter unconsciousness!

In this respect it may be said that beauty is relative; it exists for us only so far as we are able to apprehend it. And each of us discovers his own love,—a love which does not, which cannot, touch his neighbour. Thus the art of life is essentially individual and personal; it has general rules; but each of us must mould and shape it in his own way.

The art of life, then, is the art of drinking for ourselves at the inexhaustible fount of beauty. You hear music: a pedant will tell you it is the same for everybody, since it is merely molecules in vibration, air-waves impinging on the nerves. This has no interest for you. What you perceive in the music, what alone exists for you, is the one thing that science fails to catch: its sentiment. By means of a sort of spiritual chemistry you extract from the physical phenomenon its very essence—a delicious fragrance of suggestion, an image to which your heart responds. Communion with the ideal is thus no phantasy: it is simply a matter of extracting from the lower realities a reality purer and more enduring. The moment we turn our backs on science, to yield ourselves to an impression of art, we enter this higher realm. Our progress in it may be little or much; our

sensibility may be enhanced by training or restricted by fatigue; but the field of action is unlimited. Let us look at things, then, with eyes of love, and we shall at once, on all sides, spell out sublimities. This truth drew from Hugues de Saint-Victor, a school-man of the Middle Age, this cry of rapture: "O my soul, what gifts hast thou received from thy spouse! Look upon this world: all Nature fulfilleth her course, to minister to thy needs. Heaven serveth thee: Earth sustaineth thee." It was this same enthusiasm, when they saw mortal things irradiated by a love from on high, that inspired great dilettanti of life like St. Francis of Assisi; it was this which, with mathematical certainty, caused Pascal to say: "The infinite distance between body and spirit typifies the more infinite distance between the spirit and charity": in other words, if it is impossible to understand how a physical sensation transforms itself into an intellectual act, still more impossible is it to understand how an intellectual act can extend itself so far as to become an act of love.

The conclusion is, that we must draw from life what it has to give: all things are vibrating, thinking, speaking, singing around us. Let us go to beauty as we go to the South, as, long ago, the barbarians went to Rome.

Deign to think of yourself, Madam! How tire-

some it would be to spend your life in the hands of your maid or your hairdresser !

Life spells activity ; either we master it, or it masters us. The general formula for our predominance is expressed in the phrase : *Do from a loving heart what you ought to do from a sense of duty.* Cultivate your heart, feed its fires, nourish its energy ; do not abuse it, but allow it to speak to you ; if only you do not stifle it, it will show a fine capacity for loving. "Love, and do it matters not what," said St. Augustine. Love is the law of life ; and St. Augustine goes so far as to maintain that every creature, even the beast of the field, loves God. All Nature, high and low, resounds with an immense, a deafening cry, a hymn uplifted to the God of love. "And God saw that it was good."

The sweetness of life, said Wisdom of old, is the diffusion of oneself. The Master added : "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples."

Ah ! a strange earth is ours, so thick embrambled with hatreds ! It thirsts for love, is mad for love ! Our first cry when we came into the world was a cry of pain, our second a cry of love. Say that word, and men tremble, women bend their ears ; all women understand and thrill. Deep in their

hearts an echo whispers why they were made, what they are here to do. The affections traverse life like those soft breaths of Spring without which there would be no verdure, nor any flowers; the voices of hatred scour the earth like the blighting winter blast. All activity reduces itself, in the long run, to a giving of oneself. An idea only exists in so far as it is expressed. Observe how, on the stage, at the bar, in the pulpit, mere ranters, men "who love to hear themselves speak," diffuse boredom around them. But there, as elsewhere, the man who forgets himself, who gives himself unreservedly—he is the man who arouses enthusiasm, and to him the public are devoted.

No progress whatever is realised apart from this rule. Those who love nothing, do nothing; those who love amiss, commit foolishness.

The supreme Artist, in fashioning us out of love and enthusiasm, and inviting us to find happiness, did not then deceive us; to nurture one another on love is to perform a religious act, and this philosophic truth has been by no one so well expressed as by the author of the *Imitatio Christi*.

Philosophers who look at the things of this life from a wholly practical standpoint—Epicurus, Bentham, and the rest—will of course dispute the utility of the affections. "Fancy!" you may hear them say, "a commerce consisting in reckless

giving away! Better were it to amuse ourselves with blowing bubbles, like children!" And yet Epicurus has admirably shown the impossibility of dispensing with the affections. Then how does he explain them? He sees in them a mere extension of the ego: he understands a man loving a friend who is devoted enough to become his *alter ego*—a cat, a dog, an old coat, anything that he finds useful.

There is, of course, some truth in his theory, with the all-important reservation that this extension of ourselves is the effect, and not the end, of love. Affection has for its end the communication of being; and, looking for its original and supreme type, I find it in maternal love, because this love originates in the most perfect communication of the self, and presents all the characteristics of deep and enduring sentiment; it is the direct opposite of parasitism.

Theoretically, a mother's love is somewhat hard to analyse. It includes a measure of instinct, since it exists among the lower animals; only, unlike the other instincts, this does but grow and develop with the refinement of the spiritual nature. It complies in many respects with the utilitarian desideratum set forth by Epicurus; it prolongs, so to speak, the mother in the child, and the child in the mother, because, in the first place, it establishes a

moral solidarity between them, a reciprocity of devotion and service consorting with their ages; and in the second place, because between mother and child there is a certain likeness, native and acquired, certain points of moral and physical resemblance from which springs a sort of highly specialised pride, akin to the vanity of the author and the sentiment of property.

You do not choose your children; the affection you have for them belongs to the category of the purely human affections, not depending on your will and pleasure, but obligatory, like the love of brother and sister; it is cradled in the flesh. Maternal love thus has its roots in the earth, but it soars into the heavens. It is an affection based on reason, but at the same time a redeeming force, since it ripens into passion. And this arises from its nourishing itself on what is itself lovely, on what is the substance of passion, and on what produces the fine flower of the being—namely, the wonderful joy of self-devotion.

The more completely a mother has given herself up to her child, the more she loves him. She loves him if he has caused her agony and peril, if she has devoted herself to him through the long period of suckling. She loves him for the fatigues that follow after, the anxieties, the fears, the sleepless nights he has caused her; and, after the long

procession of childhood's ailments and weaknesses has passed, when the child is growing up, she loves him still for the moral perturbations he brings upon her, for her share in his sorrows and toils, his hopes and fears, his disappointments and successes. She loves him so much that she would give her all for him, even her life. Here, indeed, are all the features of a redeeming love!

Such love is the communication, or rather the very transmission, of life. Some forceful women, young widows left without support of any kind, have devoted themselves to a son. Is there in the wide world a love more ardent? Truly a beauty of existence, a ransom for wretchedness and woe, the dawn of a life exceeding high. And this love produces love; devotion engenders devotion.

So characteristic of love is this spirit of sacrifice that we find even peasant nurses, to whose care unfeeling mothers have confided their little children, becoming attached to their charges with a real, maternal, passion. Can instinct be alleged in explanation here? No, for the real mothers, who have bestowed upon their children nothing of their heart's love, hold aloof from them. But the nurse is knit to the nursling by the cares she has taken, by her very devotion—a sort of glue to women. And this quasi-motherhood rises to the pitch of passion.

In motherhood, then, there is an earthly element,

which is the obligatory side of affection, and a divine element, which is the spontaneous up-growth of devotion, with its marvellous fruits.

Hence I cannot but reverence, as a dogma profoundly rooted in our humanity, the Catholic faith in a Virgin Mother. What a strange mystery at first sight—this absence of physical obligation, this quiet efflorescence of the pure, elect Motherhood! And yet, where could be found anything more perfectly beautiful? And what more completely typifies the ideal rôle of woman!

The maternal sentiment is the necessary basis of the whole art of life.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF MEN

> "Imagine a chariot drawn by two horses, one black, the other white. The former is depressed to the earth whence he sprang; the latter has wings, and dreams of sweeping the chariot towards the boundless heavens, whence he himself descended." —PLATO.
>
> "All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet his soul is not filled."—ECCLES. vi. 7.

THEREFORE I do not propose to seek in men the idea of redemption, since they can neither be mothers, nor even nurses. Theirs is a different mission. They were the first created: in their charge are the primitive and egoistic acts in which all life commences. Eating and drinking are among the primitive acts with which man is entrusted: they are matters essentially egoistic! You are nourished on the morsel you have in your own mouth; your neighbour's mastication produces no effect on you.

The main incentive of men is the joy of power, the ambition which the eminent philosopher Alexander Bain so well calls a "malevolent sentiment";

the ambitious man is in very truth a man, unwilling to share, finding, on the contrary, his joy in making others suffer, or at least in lording it over others: those superior beings, men, as a clever woman recently defined them, are "monsters of selfishness!"

Selfishness produces, however, a crowd of other ravenous appetites, which might well be taken for passions: vanity, to wit, and pride, and wrath. These appetites are springs of action; like passion itself, they have effects both physical and moral: thus (to take a simple case) we can waken quite easily at a fixed hour as the result of a mere effort of will. In this, unquestionably, there is a mastery of the individual self which at first blush delights many a man, and appears sufficient for his happiness. Yet it does not so suffice, the proof of which is the simple fact that egoism is useless save as a point of departure: every ambition comes almost instantaneously to drape itself in grand affectations of generosity. There is endless talk of benevolence, 'altruism.' Ministers of State, members of Parliament, talk of the good of the people; the spirit of beneficence is the fount of all good. But, in reality, they imagine they will cure us of our hatreds by mingling us more closely together; and, to evolve social or collective happiness out of an aggregation of individual woes, they

propose in all sincerity to suppress the individual and turn us into mere wheels in the social machine; as Victor Hugo said, they give machinery a soul, and rob man of his. And in support of their thesis they will tell you that Society is the all, that it precedes the individual, that it has created us, and that our very thoughts thus belong to the State. They will explain to you with admirable lucidity that the mustering of two millions of ourang-outangs would suffice to create Paris, since association will give them in the mass the qualities of which they are destitute individually. As if the inventions by whose aid we live were the work of 'Society,' and not of the inventors!

In practice, this mingle-mangle of men has made us creatures of gloom, pessimists, nihilists: natural law, on the contrary, indicates that the value of every being lies in his individuality. A dog has more individuality than a hare. The mewling infant resembles, more or less, other infants; but as he grows to manhood, his features gain definition, his personality becomes distinct.

It is useless to seek the secret of the art of life in the ability to crush the individual. In that case, our ideal would be a prison, which is not to be thought of.

Individuality must be respected. The special quality for which a woman makes choice of a man

is the beauty and the moral force of his capacity for love; and her love will always translate itself by the yearning to see this man become a true man, that is to say, steadfast, sincere, individual, because individuality is the specific character of men. But obviously, besides this spirit of pure individualism, another is necessary. For my part, I am profoundly grateful to the present age for having so clearly demonstrated the nauseousness inherent in certain political schemes and public 'affairs.' It has given us a useful object lesson, and shown us how necessary it is to rate sensibility high above the sphere of virility. It is an excellent thing in women that their great ambition is happiness. How many among them would give all that they have, their rank, their fortune, for a moment's happiness! This is a sentiment utterly opposed to the ambition of which we have spoken.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

THE TRUE GUIDE TOWARDS THE ART OF LIFE

> "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."—St. John iii. 17.
>
> "One soweth, and another reapeth."—St. John iv. 37.
>
> "To be admired is nothing; the thing is, to be loved."—Alfred de Musset.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

To inherit the earth is to love that which is, to catch the savour of things. A conqueror, a general, does not inherit the earth.

Our fathers were, occasionally, mild and gentle creatures enhungered of meekness. Their rulers at times set themselves the problem of filling life with love, and this is how they made the attempt: first, by inculcating a chivalrous worship and service of woman, which inspired countless acts of bravery, and impelled the Renaissance to a magnificent intellectual development. Secondly, even in the material and practical order of things, they instituted a power resting wholly on love: the

kingship. The king was neither a despot nor a master; he was the heart of France, not her brain.[1] He represented God and the grace of God—in other words, life; he reigned, but did not govern. And men loved him because to be loved was his function. It is difficult in these days to conceive the kind of worship paid in olden times to the king and the royal house; we have become mere brain-pans, creatures of reason, with perhaps a glimmering perception, derived from the traditions still cherished in England, that unity may be sought for, the fatherland personified, and liberty established by means of a common affection in which divergences of interests and ideas disappear, thus obviating the institution of a mere constabular authority, which lumps all men together in one indistinguishable mass, like so many nuts in a bag.

Kings we have no longer; but women can fill their place, and there would be nothing extraordinary did they form actually a sort of league with the object of resuscitating among us the potency of love, the grace of God.

Each of us has his own part to play in this world. For my part, I could no more tolerate effeminate men than warrior-priests, or yokel-magistrates, or fiddler-painters; but I do think that woman

[1] See in particular the portraits of St. Louis and Louis XII by Fénelon (*Dialogues des Morts*), and also La Bruyère, *Du souverain.*

completes man, and that the greater a man is, the more he needs completing on this wise.

To me it is distressing to see women doing men's work, living a life away from home in the factory or the office. They have a high calling of their own—to be mothers; and to this they can, and they ought, to join a host of complementary labours. But the royal part, the redeeming part—who will fulfil that in the home, if the woman forsakes it?

I am not speaking here of exceptional women; I take an ordinary, average, woman, and I ask her simply to be something different from a man—no more, no less.

Such a woman is formed by man: first, by education; then, as transformed and perfected by her husband. Between the maiden and the mother an abyss yawns! Further, I acknowledge, of course, that the man must have the anxiety and responsibility of their material interests. But does this mean that the wife has no mission to fulfil save to cut her husband's bread and butter? Or is married life a Darby and Joan existence, an association, a sort of mutual insurance against the risks of mortality?

We shall see by and by that the idea of progress is an essential factor of happiness. For this reason it is necessary to rely on love: intimate communion

of soul amplifies two persons, two lives; it is the best means of self-growth, the most effectual agent of progress. It results that, herself formed by man, woman, in her turn, has for her mission the forming of men. So true is this, that an undertaking runs grave risk of failure if a woman is not its moving spirit, especially in the realm of high speculation or the spiritual life. St. Jerome, St. Francis of Sales, St. Francis of Assisi, and many another of the most venerable among men, would have stinted themselves of light and life if they had rejected the moral support of a woman.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

VOICES DEAD AND LIVING

"God giveth to a man that is good in His sight, wisdom and knowledge and joy."—ECCLESIASTES ii. 26.

Reflections of an Eighteenth-Century Woman.

"AM I, then, in this world to pass my time in trivial cares, in tumults of feeling? Surely, surely mine is a better destiny! This admiration wherewith I burn for whatsoever is beautiful and good, great and noble, teaches me that I am called to practise the same; the sublime and ravishing duties of wife and mother will one day be mine; and the years of my youth should be employed in making myself capable of fulfilling them. I must study their importance, and learn, in governing my own inspirations, how to guide in due time those of my children; by the habit of self-command and the diligent furnishing of my mind must I win secure possession of the means of making happy the sweetest of societies, of steeping in felicity the man deserving of my heart, of reflecting upon all our surroundings the joy wherewith I shall flood

him, and which will be, must be, altogether his work." [1]

From a Lady's Letter of Thirty Years Ago.

"I was reading lately your eloquent plea in behalf of studious women. . . . I venture to say that you yourself are not aware how just and true and profound are those ideas of yours, so clearly and tersely expressed—how they go to the heart of the burning questions of the day, and set some of us thrilling!

"No one but a woman who has suffered and is still suffering from the horrible spiritual tight-lacing with which we are crushed, can have a complete conception of those moral woes of which you have had merely a far-off intuition. . . . Neither one's household duties, nor the caresses of one's children, nor a husband's love, nor even at times prayer (often sadly imperfect) or good works (too rare), could quench that thirst of a soul yearning for something greater than itself, something to which it might rise by effort and toil. You have felt the futility and the danger of these strivings, which tend to crush out the fairest and noblest blossoms of the soul. You have perceived what dire ravages the river, thus diverted from its natural course, may cause as it bursts its banks.

[1] Madame Roland.

. . . Is there no effectual remedy for these moral agonies ?"[1]

A Letter of Yesterday.

"SIR,—I don't—really, I do not—despise my sex. I should think it stupid, not to say unseemly, to speak of the 'naughtiness' or the foolishness of women. But frankly, having read—to the very end—your big book on *The Women of the Renaissance* in quest of its moral, I can't help thinking that you ask too much of us.

"You want us to be perfect !—to have all the virtues that men haven't—and that's an appalling quantity ! And why in the world ? To amuse our lord and master !

"And you really think it *would* amuse him to have a learned, blue-stocking wife ? He would much rather she were pretty, and smart, and cheerful—a good fellow like himself, not squeamish about a risky story, perhaps ! But among friends——

"With your ideas of perfect women, you will have all the husbands down upon you : and what about the unmarried men ? Mine (my husband) was lately reading a volume of Max Nordau's, and he showed me this sentence : 'Safety lies in

[1] Quoted by Monsignor Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans (1802–1878), in his *Lettres sur l'éducation des filles*, p. 17.

purity, continence, or the possession of a wife without individuality, without desires, without rights of any kind.'

"Is this clear?

"Well now, while I am about it, I may as well make my confession. I am not in the least what Wagner would have called a man-eater. I am a respectable married woman—old-fashioned, if you like. But look honestly at how the matter stands: children, when you are willing to trouble about them. . . . First of all, you have to *have* them. Then comes the catechism and confirmation. . . . To have a well-ordered house, personally to attend to the flowers and a hundred and one details—at homes, dinners, visits, begging expeditions, committee meetings, one's pet charity — all this is not art, perhaps—of course it is nothing of the kind. It is business. Ah me! we are broken in to it. And then all the other things: dressing, theatre-going —and the doctor, for with this sort of thing you quickly want *him*. What man would have the strength to lead our life for long?

"These men of ours go to the club. Suggest their doing something else—liking what they don't like, and not liking what they do: Ah now! *there*, indeed, is art!

"But how do you imagine we women can find time to do anything? What do you want us to

read? For myself, I read in the train, which opens my eyes to the fact that I read too much. My mother takes me to task for all these novels. . . . Then I have a girl of twelve: mustn't I think of her marriage? And my son, what shall I do with him? His father doesn't bother about him. Really, one has too much to do. What *is* the good of racking my brains to make men a little better? Men are stronger than we. Do you fancy that if parsons and doctors were not men, I should have a tithe of my confidence in them?

"You have never found a woman making an original discovery. I go in for music, like the rest of us. Well, among all the women who have been strumming the piano since the beginning of the world, how many composers are there? Men, always men! It is a disagreeable, disheartening, melancholy, provoking fact, I admit; but there it is, and will you be so good as to tell me how to alter it?

"*P.S.*—To convince you that I am the most staid and serious of women, here are some texts:

"'Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee' (*Genesis*).

"'The dominion of man over woman is the dominion of the spirit over the flesh' (St. Augustine, *City of God,* Book xii).

"'A woman must either fear or greatly admire her doctor, otherwise she will not obey him' (*Dr. de Fleury*)."

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

THE WHOLE DUTY OF WOMEN

> "Woman must build up life out of the materials furnished by man."—ANNA LEMPÉRIÈRE.
>
> "Matters of taste are women's province: hence they are judges of the perfection of the language."—MALEBRANCHE.
>
> "'Tis not a vain thing, but the immutable truth to say that, as our ruin sprang from woman, so the source of our salvation must be born of woman."—ST. ANSELM (*Cur Deus Homo*, Book i).

THIS then is the objection: women are good for nothing but to amuse men. In Africa, it appears, there are still to be found women purchasable at from five shillings to five pounds. With us the tariff is different, but that is all civilisation has done for us.

Unhappily, women represent the one half of mankind, a fact which does not allow the total suppression of a plaything so burdensome; and, taking another standpoint, history shows us of what use they may be.

They are not taken seriously, and rightly so;

but is it possible to take them seriously, and still be right? That is the question.

Men and times, as Pastor Charles Wagner has justly said, are judged according to the degree of respect in which they hold women. The epochs at which women are held in the highest esteem are epochs of civilisation, when the element of force seems to bend before justice, and even before gentleness. Women are prophets of the ideal, a fact of which we have had many striking examples since the day when that excellent barbarian Clovis submitted to the yoke of a woman more refined than himself. I do not try to explain this phenomenon; I merely record it, and conclude from it, first, that women have a very large share of responsibility for our decadences; and secondly, that many of the defects imputed to them are acquired defects, from which a better education and a firmer guidance might have saved them.

What these defects are we know — want of stability, fickleness of mind, lack of moral fibre, flightiness, inconstancy, weakness of will. These are facts; moral strength, which should be their peculiar virtue, is often wanting in them; many of the best of them are like ivy; they warp the wall to which they cling, and if they cannot, or think they cannot, find something on which to fasten, they fall and are lost. But is feebleness of soul

never to be met with among men? What else can be developed among women, seeing the education we give them? The world sets itself to reduce women to one type, to rob them of all individuality of character; too often it does its utmost to turn them into geese, or else rebels, though fortunately many of them escape both fates.

They are bred for the marriage market, if I may use the phrase; little animals trained to be obedient and to look pretty. Prettiness!—in sooth, they are only saved from nonentity by their looks, their coquetry, or the guineas of their parents; their personal worth never, or hardly ever, enters into consideration. And yet we are amazed at the appearance of frivolous women, putty in our hands, now all trustfulness, now all hopelessness, but always 'good fellows,' who have never had a thought save for hooking a husband, and are incapable of anything except submission to the 'inevitable man' good enough to study them in detail—their doctor, their corsetier, or their something else. They take all and give nothing. They form relations rather than ties, and contacts rather than friendships. They do not even dress for themselves; their mission is to propagate the fashion. They live on a finely appointed stage: the lights often dazzle them, but never help them to clear-sightedness. Sometimes they make no little

racket; but the most cursory observer sees that they are playing the comedy of a Mr. So-and-So. And they get a name for flightiness. . . . Do I exaggerate?

Of course there are foolish women (as there are foolish men). But, to speak frankly, many have, or might have, intelligence, and a marvellous sensibility, and gifts of the highest order. Only, even when they have breadth of mind, the ideas we give them are narrow.

They think it their duty to dwarf their souls, just as they have been induced to believe in the necessity of tight-lacing, at the cost of pain, and even of health, for the sake of a captivating slimness. They fancy they are pleasing us by making themselves willow-waisted morally. I do not say that, with men equally slender, their reasoning is wholly false; but it seems to me that the spirit of sacrifice is pushed rather far, not to say ill understood, when you compress your intelligence to the cracking point, and reduce your sensibility to a thread, with the excuse that your husband doesn't care for such things, or that the dear man, returning from office, club, or golf, to dine and not to talk or rack his brains or be bored, is anxious not to find a wife who will make him feel small, or with whom, at any rate, he will have to mind his p's and q's. I do not shut my eyes, of course, to the moral suffocation which many

women suffer; but I see, too, that many of them, unhappily, have not the ghost of a suspicion of it themselves. You would greatly astonish them, and get into their bad books besides, were you to tell them that the species of spiritual asthma of which they complain, and the unstable, nervous, restless condition of which we complain, are due to nothing in the world but their own habit of burying themselves alive. Having more time than we men to spend at home, if they care so to do, and endowed with a quicker sensibility, they naturally have greater need of harbouring ideas. Here we find the secret of their unhappiness. Observe, I do not say of creating ideas, but of conceiving them, refining them, with love, and devotion, and a sort of maternal generosity. Thus, when we invite them to possess themselves at a given moment of our ideas, and to cherish them to fruition, we do them the immeasurable service of indicating how they may attain true womanhood, and how their moral and even their physical life might expand and blossom; we beseech them to open their hearts to that which sustains and blesses life—to make themselves beautiful, for there is no true beauty but that which beams from the soul. Did they but heed us, life would uplift instead of crushing them, because they would descry above its trials a definite and admirable goal—because this

moral maternity, subject to no physical exhaustion, untouched by fatigue or feebleness, would truly satisfy their craving for a higher sustenance.

"Oh, there are in my soul faculties stifled and useless, too many qualities lying undeveloped, availing nothing to myself or others!" Such was the cry of a woman.[1] How many large hearts and choice spirits have thus sunk beneath the weight of idle prejudices, unappreciated, sterile!

It is not right thus to slay souls, to condemn them to feebleness—in other words, to evil.

We call it a trifling matter, a necessary evil after all, because otherwise a man would not be master in his own house, and because, in particular, if our wives became blue stockings, they would lose all taste for the indispensable and eminently humdrum tasks of housekeeping.

Does this question really arise? The physical health of women is invariably a reflex of their moral sufferings. And what should we men say if our moral sufferings or our ailments were poohpoohed?

However, no one desires to create pedantic or ill-bred women. Do men prefer dull, empty-headed creatures, women whom, you may be sure, no idea will ever disturb? Such women read the penny novelettes and love the music-halls, which disgust

[1] Quoted by Monsignor Dupanloup.

and excite them at the same time. Is this the type sought for? Or would you prefer a useless goose of a woman, inanely religious? Women, like men, require moral supports; and they are no more able than we to find support in foolishness or abnormal ingenuousness. A woman will be a pedant, not if she is educated, but if she is ill brought up. And it is certainly to our interest that the souls of our wives should follow a natural bent.

We say: "What does my wife do? She reads, immerses herself in deep ideas, cultivates literature, art, philosophy. And what is the good of it?" What does she do?—she gives herself the means of enduring us! That is something to be thankful for; and even were we perfect, no creature of any dignity could remain entirely satisfied with the material sides of life, and become a mere child-bearing machine. This is the baser side of marriage, the side which tires.

A certain highly ingenious organisation, *L'Hospitalité du Travail*, is doing something for the moral health of the poor by providing them with honest work. Just in the same way does a woman assure her moral health. To this end she need not neglect her duties as wife and mother. She will merely steep her hands in beauty, and knead all things to that luminous glow. From all things she may cause a ray of life to spring—

in her walks, in her glances, in paying her visits, even in buying boots for her children. All things throw back a reflection of art and enthusiasm, if we will but see it.

. . . . . .

The function of women, that which it is their first duty to develop, is goodness of heart. Though they lack decision of character and vigour of intellect, it behoves them to possess a higher strength, the strength that lies in simple kindliness. This is the innate yearning for self-sacrifice, uttered in the cry of Rachel, "Give me children, or else I die." "Happiness," writes a poetess—

> "C'est l'humble fleur qui croît sous chacun de nos pas
> Et que nos dédaignons, que nous ne voyons pas.
> Les êtres doux et purs aiment les simples choses,
> Ils vont faisant le bien, semant partout des roses." [1]

How many of them adore in spirit that pleasing mystic vision which sees Paradise as a place where the material bonds of the family drop off, but where love lives on, all-filling, all-satisfying!

So, talk as we may, a woman is not to grow into a man; her real part is to lift man into likeness with herself. Nothing avails like the sweet spirit of womanliness to sift out our opinions—to guide

[1] Madame Monfils-Chesneau :—['Tis the humble flower that springs at our footsteps, despised by us, unseen by us. The gentle and pure love simple things, and go about doing good, sowing roses everywhere.]

our thinking into peaceful channels, to filter and clarify it, to sterilise it, in Pasteur's sense of the word.

What excellent confessors and physicians women might be, if they would! In whom could one find more unction, more skilful and light hands to lay bare one's wounds? And how gentle in their ministrations! How excellent in winning little by little a man's full confidence,—that trustfulness so necessary for drawing souls together, and without which life is but as empty air! One might devour all Plato or all Schopenhauer without finding in them a tithe of the practical philosophy that may inhabit a woman's little brain. Their emotions will guide their reason, and they are infinitely superior to us in that they are able to console, simply because they excel us in knowing how to suffer. They show a smiling countenance though crushed with anxieties; they appear radiant though sunk deep in a dark and quaggy rut, butterflies though things of clay, strong though feeble, modest though gripped by the harshest realities, beautiful though sick, youthful though old and tired in soul. All of them, young or old, cold or passionate, dairymaids or duchesses—all alike, unless a life of artificiality has crushed them too completely, recognise and comprehend the tones of affection, sweet beyond compare. From the pebble by the wayside to the

clouds of heaven, all things, to them, float in a radiance of sunlight and heroism. They live in a golden glowing atmosphere, breathing the dust of men.

People have greatly erred in setting up comparisons between men and women, and adjudging the latter inferior because they eschew the things men claim as highly intellectual, such as politics. But we are bound to recognise that in matters of art and emotion they have consummate accomplishments. Flowers will spring up beneath their feet; but not flowers alone, as Fénelon, Fleury, Dupanloup, and many others have already said; we have only to hand on the tradition: the education of women must base itself, above all, on the development of conscience and sensibility, and consequently on the idea of liberty.

. . . . . .

There are still some other objections to be noted.

By developing the sensibility of women, some one will say, are you not developing an element of weakness? Are they not already only too impressionable? Some of them are never two minutes the same in appearance, sentiments, or ideas. When you meet them, you are never sure what you are going to find. Nothing is constant but their inconstancy. They laugh with one eye,

and weep with the other. If you venture to utter to-day the opinion they were defending yesterday, they eye you mistrustfully; the idea has a suspicious appearance, coming from you. They lose patience easily, as all men know; and their tempers too: all animation about a trifle, helpless in important matters. Is this a tendency to encourage?

It is easy to reply that these weaknesses are due wholly to our failure to educate their sensibility. Children also are creatures of caprice! But even the severest critic of women will admit, I think, that, under their apparent instability, they possess a capacity for constancy of sentiment far greater than ours. They never forget. In their hearts lie affections wonderfully durable and wonderfully deep. Innumerable women show a courage in which we are lamentably deficient—the courage to sacrifice their lives with quiet determination, not for the purpose of destroying other lives, but to build them up: the heroism of hypocrisy! A noble army, this!

Some one will object still further that to cultivate her impressions is all very well for a rich woman, whose time is her own, but an impossibility for a woman with serious duties to perform. What a mistake! It is only busy women who have time to spare: idle women never have a moment. Besides,

good taste is not to be bought from a show-case at Whiteley's ; a woman accustomed to work, meditation, a simple life, lays a better foundation than a rich or indolent woman.

There remains finally the notorious fact that women have been clearly proved incapable of original performance : they have made no famous discoveries. This objection seems to me of little or no account, since, in my view, pure science is not women's sphere, while on the other hand their general and synthetic art, limited to universal insight,[1] is excellently adapted to soften the brutalised victims of life's mechanical round. After all, however, good management is a sort of science, and it must be admitted that in this respect women's work, though done in silence, is of the highest order, a point in which De Tocqueville is at one with Cæsar. The science of controlling a household and being the life and soul of its members is as valuable as another ; and, perchance, many a legislator would not much care to see his household managed as he manages the ship of State.

. . . . . .

Finally, we must form a clear idea of the precise duty of women, which is to develop their natural

[1] [In the original, " des clartés de tout :" a quotation from Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*, act i., scene iii., where Clitandre says that he is quite agreeable to women having *des clartés de tout*, but cannot abear a woman who loves learning for learning's sake.]

gifts, and boldly to adopt the virtues in which men are lacking.

They are the instrument of life, one might almost say the magic cauldron of life. They set all its elements in fermentation. To transform and to impart is their whole concern. Scarcely have they opened their eyes upon the world but they must needs have a doll to cherish, and tend, and fondle. And they continue thus, engendering, cherishing, tending, fondling, unless life warps their nature. "Their machinery," as Rousseau said, "is admirable for assuaging or exciting the passions." Theirs is a treasure that grows richer in the spending. Even from a physiological point of view, they exhibit a marvellous potentiality of endurance, and sympathy, and productiveness. They are not armed for attack; the finest natured are the strongest; their chords ring wonderfully to all appeals of sentiment; they love money with resignation, but glory intoxicates them; swift views, sudden impulses, are their breath of life; their enthusiasm is contagious, and they shed around them the youth and freshness of life. So, without intention or effort, they are constantly bestowing their very selves; they clothe all things with their own enthusiasm. Science they vindicate by the noble fruits they obtain from it; from thorns they cause roses to spring forth, and these roses in their turn

they cultivate, giving them an added beauty and fragrance, and fresh blossoms all the seasons round. Excellent gardeners of the world! Their rôle no doubt has varied with the circumstances and needs of different times, but the crying necessities of the present time serve only to accentuate it and bring it into higher relief. The ignorance and weakness of women work more real mischief than the ignorance and weakness of men. The passive virtues no longer avail for governing; active virtues are the need of to-day.

In olden days, the king belonged to all men, and represented something indispensable to every society, a person with no private interests, but wholly devoted to the interest of the public. He had no property of his own, not even a park, not even his palace. Now, daring as the idea may appear, let us say that women also can only reign on condition of communising their souls. Otherwise they will lose all influence, even with their sons. A woman comes short of essential duties if she is content with bemoaning the evils of the times and playing patroness to good little schoolboys, instead of learning for herself, and revealing to others, what the evils of the times really are, of drawing out the manhood slumbering within us, and giving it new graces. She bears the burden of human joy. And a woman of intelligence

and leisure has, in this particular, duties more complicated than she who milks the cows or who minds the poultry.

She must think and love by her own energy, instead of bearing in her heart a thousand abortive sentiments. Her husband and her friends hunt, speculate, work, make havoc of their lives. Even so : she has no right to do the same. If, having the power, she does not redeem men, surely it is she who ruins them ?

No difficulty will discourage her if she first fully realises that she possesses all that is needful for success, and then sets her responsibilities before her in a clear light.

She will sometimes make mistakes ; enthusiasm itself, the delicious art of giving things charm, has its perils, carrying one away into the unreal, opening a loophole for illusion, day-dreams, prejudices, fictions. What matters it, so long as the tree is vigorous ! Would you fell a superb poplar because you noticed on it some sprigs of mistletoe ?

It may be also that a woman will go astray in point of vanity. That is a pretty common folly (even among men), and very provoking when it is shown in questions of etiquette or dress. But why should we not agree that there is a noble, an excellent form of vanity, which consists in having perfect knowledge of the things one can

love, rejoicing in the apostleship one exercises, and, to attain success therein, cultivating diligence, refinement, attentiveness, industry, persuasiveness ? Where is the harm ?

But we need not dwell on these fears. The special goal of a woman's life, that in which it is distinguished from the life of a man, is manifest : it is the great things, the things to be loved, the things which do not 'pay.' Man serves money. You make it your servant, ladies, and you must aim higher, at the things that are not bought and sold ; attachments, real friendships—these are your speculations. Be faithful to them. In faithfulness is redemption.

A moment ! As I bow to you, I fancy that I see on my wall, in place of a modern paper, a grand fresco of long ago, an exquisite symbol of your reign : the Angel from Heaven, kneeling in humble adoration before the spotless Motherhood, proclaiming that from your devotion shall proceed the welfare of mankind. The scene is simple and sweet, the colour serene : a closed room, a curtain hanging, barely a glimpse of the sky.

PART THE SECOND

THE MIDDLE LIFE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

CREATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

> "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes."—ECCLESIASTES xi. 9.

THE art of life, we have seen, lies in the right ordering of the emotions, and the duty of exercising it falls to women.

Now, in practice, the regulation of the emotions implies: first, the ability to reach them; secondly, the ability to direct them towards an end to be defined.

A woman acts upon the sensibility of men, indirectly by means of certain implements, namely, the things or the ideas among which they move—in other words, the atmosphere or environment—or directly, by her own personality.

Let us sketch rapidly these different methods.

Man is in general rather indolent than stupid. We did not ask for life; we live because we were born, and live upon the earth, and on the things

of the earth, because we are driven thereto by necessity. We shall die when God pleases, and go whithersoever divine justice and mercy appoint. We are subjects of impressions, rather than seekers after them.

Thus it happens that our environment seizes upon us by means of our senses and perceptions, and so far penetrates us as to modify our nature to a surprising degree. We are the creatures of the air we breathe, and of the objects by which we are surrounded.

No one can escape this influence, which Taine indeed considered as the almost unconditional law of our development. Presently, in proportion as this influence works upon us, a new condition arises—that of suggestion. Our sensibility grows, our individual force of resistance diminishes, until we succumb to an overmastering influence, special or general. And it is a singular thing that such possession is contagious; at certain moments we see a whole nation at the mercy of a fixed idea, or whole orders of men controlled by one and the same affliation.

This is a class of phenomena about which it is indispensable that women, for their own sakes, should have very clear notions.

Such notions are the basis of their art.

Dr. A. R. Wallace, and many other writers after

him, have pointed out the singular harmony subsisting between living beings and the conditions of their life. The rabbit is a simple and a well-known case in point: left to run wild, it assumes a dusky drab colour, which renders it indistinguishable from dead leaves and bracken; domesticated, it becomes white, black, piebald.

Physically, we are subject to a like influence, and still more morally. Sights, scents, sounds, all act upon us and tend to modify us.

It is a palpable fact that light is an element of cheerfulness, because it has a slightly stimulating effect on the brain—because, in other words, it is tonic.[1] The light-heartedness of the street boy of Naples is different in kind from that of the London arab.[2]

Further, our whole mechanism is marvellously of a piece; it is in the true sense a unity. M. Féré has proved conclusively that the ear hears better if the eye is simultaneously affected by a pleasant sensation, or the nose is conscious of a grateful odour; in short, if, while our attention is occupied with one sense in particular, we engage the participation of all the others.[3]

[1] M. de Fleury.

[2] It has been remarked also that suicides are most common at times of great heat or great cold.

[3] Two English students of the part played in æsthetic perception by the motor element, Miss Violet Paget (Vernon Lee) and Miss C.

Nature's art is identical: it envelops us completely. No wall-paper displays more numerous or more varied colours; no orchestra has more tones. And we make for ourselves gardens, we love to live among flowers or animals: they act upon us.

Translate these rules into the moral life, and you will find them the same. Long ago it was said: A man is known by the company he keeps. There is a sort of social æsthetics, purely external, which saves one from many a fall, and goes hand in hand with the noblest sentiments.

Take a man from the plough, deck him in a soldier's tunic, enroll him in a company, set him marching to the band: you have made a new man of him; all that remains is to speak to him of his country and his king. A man whose heart is seared and empty wanders aimlessly into a church; a simple touching hymn, the dim religious light of the sanctuary, among half-veiled arches and mysterious carvings, will penetrate him with a strange, an unaccustomed feeling. In politics also the environment is not without its æsthetic influence. A fine atmosphere of beauty has clung around parliamentary liberty

Anstruther Thomson, showed in the *Contemporary Review* of October and November 1897 that the whole physical organisation is concerned in the æsthetic emotions.

from days gone by. The Speaker of the House of Commons, as we know, is accustomed to call his colleagues individually "the honourable member for so-and-so," and only utters the personal name when calling them to order ; as though the man himself had then emerged by some mistake. One day a member who had been dining ventured to reply to Mr. Speaker's gentle warning, and asked what would happen in case he resisted. "God only knows!" replied the Speaker dryly, quickly raising a finger. Take this as an example of the spell of the environment.

This pervading atmosphere of art has certainly a capital importance. As in physical nature, so in the moral nature, there is a temperature favourable to growth. Yet we must not imagine that our moral transformations come about easily and without opposition. Some men exert a positive resistance against the influence of their environment ; and what ought to quicken, slays them: Louis XVI, for instance, in a humble walk in life would have been the most excellent of men, and as locksmith would never have mounted the scaffold. Others, on the contrary, will bring a disturbing element into the most peaceful of societies. Incorrigible utilitarians will turn art into a mere instrument of perversion.

Thus the creation of the environment demands

much delicacy and skill. The general principles never vary; but it is very necessary to know how to employ them, for in practice it is a question of coaxing, charming, convincing.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

NATURE

> "The spring sun is beautiful, and his light is sweet! The birdling, the insect, the plant, all Nature has again found life, is steeped in it, revels in it; yet I sigh because this life has not come to me, and no sun has risen upon men's souls, which remain in cold and gloom. While waves of light and warmth are flooding that other world, mine remains ice-bound in darkness. Winter enwraps it with his rime, as with an eternal shroud. Weep on, weep on, ye who have no Spring!"—LAMENNAIS.

IN opening the campaign, an external impression, vivid, unhackneyed, is profitable. A rural environment is good for people who are used to town.

Every one, with barely an exception, is fond of the country; but our fondness takes very diverse forms. Artists love its sunlight and air, its fair colours, its freedom and activity; practical people like it for the physical occupations they associate with it, hunting, fishing, or the like.

Men's souls, like rivers, are fed for the most part from mountain heights. The monks showed a sound knowledge of life when they chose for

the seat of their well-ordered existence of labour and prayer, in boundless converse with Nature's simplicity, a hill-top, or the bank of a stream, or at least the deep recesses of a wood. To us also a lake or pond, the sea, the forest, speak the primal language.

Here am I in a flat sequestered region. Do you know this singular belt of country called the Forest of Orleans? Perhaps not, for happily the lovers of solitude and silence have not yet discovered it. Long, broad, unfrequented roads stretch away indefinitely through the green cloister of the woods, highways for our waking dreams. Above, a grey sky; in the far distance, a bluish haze. Not a sound save the whistling of the wind. The very animals hide from view. Here and there, a broad, melancholy pond. Everywhere, an atmosphere of sober, honest thought. My peaceful dwelling among its immemorial avenues might pass for a convent. From my study, like my friend Montaigne, I look out upon water and sky, tall poplars, and woods, woods unending, in winter drinking the mists, in summer clashing in the tempest and challenging the thunder. Man here is active and unspoilt, a woodman or a thinker; the necessity of clearing his way is brought continually home to him; life is elemental in its simplicity; what could softness avail him,

between the brambles and the sky? Thought also becomes of equal temper with the oaks: you hold converse with an ancient oak, which, as in Tennyson's lyric, talks with you of ages past; you lend your ear to his inarticulate accents, and gather a meaning from his immobile gestures. Dante holds that the veins of certain trees flow with the blood of men whom, for their violence, divine justice has thus imprisoned, as Daphne of old was changed into a laurel. Blest silence! blest solitude! What refreshment, what renewed vigour does man find in this resolved personal intercourse with steadfast nature, within two hours of Paris!

Our northern regions thus impress us with a sense of vigour and intimacy; more, they have the art of not divulging all their secret, of veiling all things in a shimmering haze. They are to us, as it were, a vast theatre or a spacious hall, giving us respite from wall-paper vegetation and hot-water pipes; and, strange to say, the sky is nearer to us than our ceiling—

> "Tout dit, dans l'Infini, quelque chose à quelqu'un!
> . . . Tout est plein d'âme."[1]

Though it is held, fairly enough, that our love for Nature dates from the eighteenth century, the

[1] Victor Hugo. [In the Infinite, everything says something to some one; all is full of soul.]

northern peoples have loved Nature always. Long ago the old Flemish masters introduced landscapes into their portraits, and bouquets into their interiors, or strewed pinks and roses over the pages of missals.

Women, who are such artists in these matters, and are so much affected by the joyous sunshine, the tranquil flow of streams, the immutable silence of the woods, might well attune us to Nature's diapason, and, by gently leading us back into close converse with her, loosen the toils of our civilisation.

The southern sky has other resources. Nothing misty, nothing blurred there; all is joy and brightness and affirmation, a believing instead of a sceptical clime. The Greeks of old called themselves 'children,' and in truth the Greek revelled in existence with the joy of a child happy to be alive. To him old age itself wore a smile, and as his physical wants were very few, all the things of Nature seemed to him in pleasant and delightful harmony. He sported with Nature, and his fancy peopled her with the genii of the woods.[1]

[1] "The Italians are the most impious of men: they make light of the true religion, and rally us Christians because we believe all that the Scripture contains. . . . A phrase they utter in going to church is, 'Let us go and conform to the popular error.' 'If we were obliged,' they say again, 'to believe implicitly the word of God, we should be of all men most miserable, and could never enjoy a moment's pleasure. Let us conform for decency's sake, and not believe everything.' . . . The Italians are either epicureans or slaves to superstition. The masses

How great an artist, too, was St. Francis of Assisi! He never said within himself that he was accomplishing a work of art, but to him, in his simple, unchecked transports of enthusiasm, all things were love. He could have discerned in a stone, as with Röntgen's rays, a spark of life. "Fire and hail, snow and vapours, praise ye the Lord," said the Psalmist. And St. Francis also poured out his whole heart in song, with his sisters the flowers and the animals his brothers; every page of his life speaks of his relations with the lambs and the birds. He discoursed to the swallows that flocked to him at his call, interpreted to them the beauty of their life, and drew solace from their pipings and the beating of their wings.

One day, crossing the Venetian lagoons with one of his brethren, he passed by a bush vocal with song. He said to his companion: "Lo, the birds our brothers sing praise to their Creator; let us therefore draw near, and blend our praise with theirs, singing the holy office of the Church." [1]

And thus indeed he did, chaunting in antiphon with the birds, from time to time beseeching them

fear St. Anthony or St. Sebastian more than Christ, because of the plagues they send. . . . Thus they live in the depths of superstition, not knowing the word of God, believing neither in the resurrection of the body nor in everlasting life, and fearing naught but the pains of this life" (Luther).

[1] *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, cap. xii.

to hold silence while he should uplift his strain. And he discoursed to them, and blessed them, and bade them go joyously and glorify God in the pure regions of the air. And himself was happy: "I perceive 'tis Heaven's will we remain here for a space, since our brethren the birds seem to find so great comfort in beholding us."[1]

After forty nights of sleeplessness St. Francis fell into a trance, and bidding one of his brethren take a pen, burst forth into a marvellous canticle to the Sun, a hymn of human joy closing with an eulogy of Death; for to him Death itself, serene and radiant, becomes Life! Exquisite song of triumph, the jubilate of this poor tattered wight, this pilgrim of love: "Blessed be God my Lord for all His creatures, and blessed above all for our lord and brother the Sun, giver of the day's light. Beautiful is he, and he gloweth with wondrous splendour, ever bearing witness of Thee, O my God! Blessed be Thou, O Lord, for the Moon our sister, and the Stars; praise to Thee for my brother the Wind, for the Air and the Clouds." And thus he continues the litany of universal love.

What need of further examples?—St. Antony of Padua, out of conceit with men, pausing on the shore of the blue Adriatic and talking to the

[1] St. Bonaventure, *Life of St. Francis.*

fishes; or Jacopone da Todi, chaunting through the grating from the depth of his dungeon, "All that the wide world containeth urgeth me to love. Beasts of the field, birds of the air, fish of the sea, all creatures sing before my love."[1]

The good people of France are, as a rule, less lyrical, yet they have never flagged in praise of the fields. George Sand, an ardent lover of the country, tells us indeed that sometimes she felt her soul as it were dissolved in her surroundings; she imagined herself running, leaping, soaring, so passionately did she participate in the general life. Even at Paris you will see loiterers, fascinated by the sight of the Seine flowing beneath a bridge, contemplating it with unregarding eyes; or impressionable people gazing into the sky while their thoughts are far away, occupied with quotations on 'Change, mayhap, and yet susceptible to the nameless charm.

In the sunny countries, woman represents, even in the town, the centre of the decorative scheme, the soul of Nature, the thing of living beauty. Sensualists and mystics, slaves and free, all live out of doors on the public square: woman seems to spring up like a flower between the flagstones, in all her charm and brilliance.

It is not mine to say whether the French in

[1] Ozanam, *Poètes franciscains*.

general, and Parisians in particular, belong to the North or to the South ; but I fancy that they are, as a rule, more prone to look at a woman herself than at what surrounds her. If so it be, then nature produces on them just the impression they desire.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE ART OF THINGS

ART has for its aim the perfecting, the heightening, of our sensibility to physical objects. Contact with the true and the useful being often void of charm, whether because the beautiful passes 'out of range,' as hunters say, or because the ugly presses upon us somewhat too closely, the art of life consists in creating for oneself a nest, a little sanctuary, an environment that one can love, and in presenting by their softer sides the things with which contact is inevitable.

Likewise, a woman's art consists in drawing from the most modest occupations a ray of beauty and of love; and the surest means of discovering this ray in them is to put it there.

One gross error of our time is an æsthetic error. The belief is current that there are some things which are essentially artistic, which make you an artist from head to heel as soon as you touch them, and other things which can never be artistic. People rush to the first, and eschew the others. They fancy themselves to be artists by the mere

fact of their handling a chisel or a brush instead of a plough; a governess, be she ever such a goose, thinks herself a superior person. In reality there are some things to which art is applied, and other things to which it is not applied. The art of life consists in living steadily, without perturbations; in doing honestly that for which we were born, and in doing it with love.

I cannot forget, for example, the singular impression produced upon me, in a corner of the old hospital of Bruges, where Memlinc worked, by a group of beguines scraping carrots and murmuring their prayers the while. I was leaving the place with a band of tourists, my eyes filled with beauty, my heart haunted by the exquisite visions of Memlinc: these placid women, not one of whom raised her head at so commonplace an event as a stranger passing, wholly absorbed, as they were, in blending the love of God with the fulfilment of His laws, well reflected the sentiment of the painter, the living ray of grace. I seemed to see around them a glamour of art.

Take a woman who, from an entirely different point of view, showed the same instinct for finding loveliness in common things—the celebrated Madame Roland: "The drying of her grapes and plums, the garnering of her nuts and apples, the due preparation of her dried pears, her broods of

hens, her litters of rabbits, her frothing lye, the mending of her linen, the ranging of her napery in its lofty presses—all these were objects of her personal, unstinted, unremitting care, and gave her pleasure. She was present at the village merry-makings, and took her place among the dancers on the green. The country people for miles around sought her aid for sick friends whom the doctor had given up. She ranged the fields on foot and horseback to collect simples, to enrich her herbarium, to complete her collections, and would pause in delight before tufts of violets bordering the hedgerows aglow with the first buds of spring, or before the ruddy vine-clusters tremulous in the autumn breeze : for her, everything in meadow and wood had voices ; to her, all things smiled." [1]

When a woman has equipped herself with this special force of beauty, she has done much. It only remains for her to nourish and propagate it ; her life is a permanent work of art ; around her an atmosphere is naturally created, in which all things solicit and give play to our noblest sentiments. Ah ! this art is no chimera, no vain or useless thing ; it is the very nursery of life. Even in a cottage it smiles upon the wayfarer, presenting flowers to his view, teaching him the graciousness and the necessity of joy. M. Guyau defines the

[1] O. Gréard.

artist as "he who, simple even in his profundity, preserves in the gaze of the world a certain freshness of heart, and (so to say) a perpetual novelty of sensation." That is the impression which a woman should produce around her, and no tremendous exertion is needed, since the first rule is frankness and simplicity. Luxury tends to be hurtful. It is useless to go far afield, to search out recondite styles, to complicate, to love the affected, the rare, the eccentric, the languid. Let the house be a living and well-ordered place, where the accessory does not take precedence of the essential, where every object has its own place and its specific character. Breathe into all things a sentiment of unity, and also, as far as possible, of spaciousness and comfort.

In the country, respect the ancient dwelling, even though a little dilapidated—the old walls, the old furniture, the old avenue, the old church. Try to feel in presence of a living personality. A house is a book in stone, and, if you will, you may give to everything a soul, even to stones. Allow your own life freely to enter and pervade this old foundation. Irregularities in structure, recent additions, are all voices of existence. Something of your own soul thus cleaves to all these walls. Is it not true that the architect of a building, the painter of a fresco, the carver of an arabesque, have left upon their

work some fragments of their souls? Their thought hovers like an exhalation about the walls. The voice of a singer causes the composer's soul to live again in us; the painter, the sculptor, speak to us, serve us as mentors. I also, in the pages of this little book, shall leave some fragments of my soul, with the hope that in the shadow of my thought some one, perchance, may pray and love.

The simplicity of a house inspires the visitor with a feeling of restfulness, and, if I may venture to say so, of simplicity of heart, exceedingly pleasant and profitable. The perfection of art is to escape notice. A room which does not smack of the upholsterer, which is redolent of life, exhales a peculiar charm. We feel grateful to it for its partial response to our secret needs, our constant yearning towards an unattainable ideal, our longing for a real grasp of the blessed life. No hard and fast rule obtains here, except that, while a woman may impress us by the magnificence of her dwelling, she can only touch our spirits by the discreet art of making us partakers of her own spiritual life.

Nothing is so distressing as furniture with pretentious and laboured outlines, draperies with ill-matched colours, diffuse hangings that are poor substitutes for the shade of tree or cloud. It behoves us to give the whole a convincing character of simple, natural, development, and by an artistic

sense of arrangement to secure that what is meant to attract the visitor shall attract him instantly.

The whole atmosphere should be one of "noble pleasure," as John Stuart Mill said—of serenity and permanence, all things suggesting the presence of a strong and fervent soul, which imparts something of its glow to surrounding objects, and invites other, kindred, souls to itself.

The trinkets and gimcrack ornaments of the drawing-room cabinet betoken restlessness of mind. Even when tinsel, glitter, and vulgar luxury are absent, a false note is struck by over-decoration. Existence is such a complicated business nowadays, that without a large fortune we cannot permit ourselves to live and die after our own devices. Sooner or later we envy the lot of women who possess but one dress, for these, at any rate, as M. Charles Wagner says, "never ask wherewithal shall we be clothed." I am inclined to agree with the English, who like elbow-room in a palace in spite of masterpieces of art, and prefer a somewhat unkempt greensward, so it be spacious and seemly, to the trumpery little garden squares and diminutive close-cropped lawns roofed with glass, encumbered with pasteboard groves and toy landscapes, which have so sadly ruined our taste and the health of our children.

The general scheme of colour has immense

importance in a room. What is colour? We do not know. Has it a real existence? We cannot tell. But these questions are of no importance; colour exists for us, and that is enough. Sensations of colour are produced, it appears, by light waves of various rapidity; they affect and influence us in the same manner as sensations of sound, and almost as imperceptibly as our food.

It has been proved that the mere proximity of a vivid colour is sufficient to produce a certain muscular excitement, analogous to the irritation resulting from a piercing sound. The fancy, so popular during the Renaissance, that the several colours favoured the development of particular feelings, has become, through the labours of Féré, Wundt, and others, a scientific fact.

Thus the choice of colours for our rooms demands the greatest care. Red, without affecting men as it affects bulls, stimulates them to energetic action, or at least to movement, to such an extent that in Germany red has been employed in certain factories as a fillip to activity!

Bright red might well be largely used, toned down with dark blue; blue has a tranquillising and strengthening effect. Green suggests peacefulness, and white hints at frailty; while yellow is impossible to almost every one, and is not exhilarating. Bright yellow and carmine, how-

ever, colours much in vogue during the French Renaissance, and to-day the colours of the flag of Spain, produce a very pleasing effect in combination.

Nothing could be more abhorrent to the eye than the majority of wall-papers. You gaze on these nameless abominations, and then fancy you can pursue your ideal, order your life aright! And you are amazed that there are so many paltry ideals, so many insignificant lives! "The paper of the room in which we live has a silent but irresistible influence upon us; when we awake, it plays upon our will, dulled by sleep and enervated by our dreams. It operates upon us again when, in hours of sickness, we are condemned to remain with our gaze rivetted upon the foliage, or flowers, or persons represented on the walls, and when imagination is inactive from sheer lassitude."[1] It gains a speedy hold on visitors also, fascinates them by the implacable geometrical severity they discern beneath the apparently capricious medley of flower and ornament. Our imagination may be said often to lick the walls, seeking for nourishment thereon.

If you wish to create an idealistic atmosphere in your home, make your ceilings a principal feature. Dispense with whitewash or cloudy tints,

[1] M. André Hallays, *Journal des Débats*, June 1, 1900.

and construct your ceiling of stout beams, heavily moulded, inscribed with maxims of high inspiration and solace, and coloured in strong tints of red, or blue, or green. Sacrifice the walls ; make them bright with mirrors, so that their disappearance may add to the size and the cheerfulness of the room. Window-frames stained in dark tones will form a substantial setting for the landscape, and bring you into direct communication with it. But if misfortune has placed you in a street where you have a disagreeable outlook, to which attention is better not attracted, have the windows lightly frosted, so that they too may cease to be.

There is a certain lack of distinction in filling one's rooms with furniture solely for ease and comfort—sofas, long chairs, ottomans, settees. The big armchair of a bygone age, standing firm and capacious, was a thing of quite different stamp, dignified, even in the graceful Louis Quinze style. And as to certain freakish articles neither useful nor ornamental, incapable of responding even to the modest desire for something to sit upon—they, happily, have had their day.

The whole effect should be one of dignity combined with homeliness.

An amazing and preposterous fashion prevalent nowadays is to live with open doors. Whether this is due to an affectation of social importance,

or merely to a wish to avoid suffocation by the heating apparatus, I cannot say. But can you imagine a more lamentable performance than to stand among one's servants in a sort of gilded market-hall, and receive a stream of visitors with whom, naturally, one can exchange only a word or two about the weather? This is the express negation of all art.

Nay, banish altogether that pitiful invention, the heating apparatus, or at least do not allow it to oust the fire on the hearth, with its genial, steady blaze, a joy to eyes and heart, indispensable as a lure for friends. And let the daylight, the glorious sunbeams, stream freely in at your windows, all generosity and joy. It will cost you, perhaps, the confession of a few wrinkles, but your heart will renew its youth.

Rich or poor, do not crowd your walls; set on them merely a living and friendly note, something that is a final revelation of your self, an element of life—a dainty water-colour, a fine engraving. Is not this a thousand times better than a vulgar glitter, or even than tapestries? It is you, your thought, that you should stamp on these walls! Thereby you extend and strengthen your personal influence. What recks it me whether I find this or that object in your drawing-room? Am I stepping into a photographer's studio, or into a museum?

It is *you* that I want to see. And, to tell the truth, I do not think it very delightful to see above your head your own portrait, the portraits of your husband and children. The end of portraiture is to replace the absent; besides, the painter or engraver strikes me too forcibly as interposing between you and me, and as indicating, almost brutally, how I am to understand you. What would happen, I wonder, if I should admire the imitation more than the original?

I would rather divine you, come to know you, in my own fashion, as the secret unity among your belongings grows upon me. If the visitor on entering perceives no discordant element; if his eye, wandering presently towards the chimney-piece or some other salient point, rests on a beautiful head enhaloed, as it were, with Christian sentiment and ideals, or on a beautiful Greek statue, calm, dignified, in no wise laboured or strained, natural in pose and expression: at once he is at ease, his confidence is already gained.

Presently his glance will range afield; he will perceive some fine early Italian master, adorable in its artlessness, crowded with ardent ideas, and fragrant with noble aspirations; or, if you are touched with the unrest of life, if needs you must plumb the mysterious and the unknown, you will have found room for some Vincian vision; or

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perhaps for the clever and superficial gaieties of the French school, or the admirable warmth and spirit of some of our landscape painters.

Many people indulge a taste for small canvases, because these will hang anywhere, go with anything, form part of the furniture, and suggest no manner of problem — cowsheds, to wit, scoured miraculously clean, interiors all spick and span, kettles athrob, alive; or watery meadow-lands, with grey trees and grey water, and clouds fretted, or far stretched out, or close-packed, or flocculent. These do not tire the brain; they offend no one, except that, from the house-decorator's point of view, they are often of too superior a workmanship.

Rembrandt is the divinity of shade, the antipodes of the Italian sunny expansiveness. In an impenetrable cloud he dints a spot of gold, which proves to be a drunkard, a beggar, a melancholy wight, a rotund Boniface, a needy soul, a Jew from Amsterdam or Batignolles, or possibly himself.

There are also the Gargantuesque old Flemish masters, with their phenomenal processions, their carousals, free to all, reeking with jollity and life.

It seems to me that in matters of art one should say *raca* to nothing; every æsthetic impression has some use. And I really do not see the utility of a discussion, like that which has been wrangled over

for ages, about the relative importance of form and substance. Certainly there are features that are accidental, and others that are essential: you will choose according to your taste. The arts of design have no title to govern your soul; it is your part to govern and make use of them. Do you prefer to invoke an image, or a thought? Do you wish to surround yourself with the brutalities of so-called Truth, or with suggestions, forms which efface themselves in the interests of impressions or ideas? Do you love beauty of form, exact outlines, well-defined contours, or a broad effect, a surface whose lines are lost in the ambient shade? These are questions for yourself to answer. Good tools are those which suit you best. It is not the mission of painter or sculptor to reproduce a scene with mathematical precision: a photographer would do this better; the artist's part is to be of service to you, to furnish you with the elements of the art of life. Indeed, it is the distinguishing mark of the artist that he singles out and segregates, in a crowd, in a landscape, the one choice object: upon this he fastens, he is alive to all its manifold nuances, and the charm is so great that around this object he sees nought but gloom.

The æsthetic object does you the delightful service of supplementing your own visions, and of compassing you about with ideas. You do not

inquire what it is, but what it expresses; the cleverest of still-life pictures, like those to be seen in Italian houses, would give you but a very superficial pleasure. You need support, not illusions; this marble, as no one knows better than yourself, is marble; but it speaks to you.

Only, the message of art needs to be properly directed. To catch its accents, or to make them heard, one must impart to it something of one's own. How wonderfully the meaning of things, even their most precise intellectual meaning, varies for us, day by day, through distraction or a change of mood! If our mind wanders as we read a book, the loveliest thoughts slip past us as though over marble. A lady who had been stirred to enthusiasm by a somewhat mediocre book wrote asking me to recommend another which would produce the same effect. I told her first to fill herself with the same enthusiasm, and then to take down from her shelves any book she pleased. One day, subdued to our mechanism, we pass on like blind men; the next, if our hearts are touched and our spirits satisfied, we feel suggestion to the full, and go so far as to see, in a phrase or a picture, ideas which the author never dreamed of putting there.

Let us not, then, be anxious to crowd our rooms with beautiful things; far better display things few

in number but high in worth, adapted to their surroundings, and performing in some sort the office of the conductor of an orchestra.

To enforce this reflection, it is enough to mention the irritating effect produced by certain museums. The genus 'collection'—that is the rock to shun! All these hapless canvases, torn from their luminous, hallowed, intimate, unique spot, are there exhibited high and dry in learned desolation, rootless, forlorn. At ten o'clock you have to don the freshness of spirit necessary to enjoy them, and doff it on the stroke of four or five, according to the season. Instead of entering a gallery with heart at rest, and seeing in the sanctuary the object of worship, you pull it to pieces, criticise it with the pedantry of an office-clerk, and puzzle out a needless meaning. Some dear good souls discuss the subject, others its treatment and technique; and the keepers stroll about or doze in a corner. What a crime to despoil streets and palaces and churches, the very tombs, for the sake of ranging such labels in a row! This is art as officialdom knows it.

In a room of great simplicity, a single work, adapted to its surroundings, and excellently interpreting a woman's tastes, renders us a wholly different service. This is no corpse to anatomise. You contemplate an object of love, and all things

glow with a new lustre ; you forget, if only for a moment, the offences of life. And I maintain that the poorest woman in the world, if she has faith in beauty, will always be able thus to fill her home with light ; she can always place in it some flowers or a photograph.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE ART OF IDEAS

You may furnish your rooms in a higher sort by adorning your chairs with beings who speak and act. In referring to these familiar objects as furniture, I mean no offence, but simply imply that they are not friends of yours, Madam, but merely accessories, persons who sink their own ideas and tastes to assist your art with theirs.

In this category, musicians probably hold the first place. Indeed, music plays a much higher part in æstheticism than the manual arts, a part scarcely inferior to that of the intellectual arts. Like the latter, it has (so to say) no substance, appealing solely to the feelings ; whether we will or no, it rarely fails to take possession of us, though merely by tangled sensations ; it catches us as in a web, and does with us what it will ; it moves us, lulls us to sleep, stimulates us. It derives its effects from the relations of tone, whether with neighbouring tones on the scale, or with the singer and the listener. A small thing in itself, it is yet of capital importance : all life, all motion even, produces

sound, from the wind and the sea upwards; and recourse has ever been had to sound for the purpose of touching men.

Beggars and the blind have always sung, as they do to this day; song has ever been employed to console the afflicted, to hearten soldiers on the march, even to soothe physical pain.

With very good reason, then, do women regard music as their own peculiar sphere. Thus, at the epoch of the Renaissance, in the heyday of their influence, they adopted musical attributes in their portraits; these were, so to speak, their sceptres.

Does it beseem a woman to aim higher, and to seek to create around her a real atmosphere of philosophy, history, science, poetry—in short, an intellectual atmosphere? Yes, and no. If she is so reliant on her own wit and ascendency as to make all the personages she gathers but garniture for her soul or faithful radiators of her glory, mere apostles of her influence, yes. But no, if she has any fear of being absorbed by her surroundings, and reduced to the level of a landlady.

It is often said that salons are things of the past, and the fact is lamented; in truth there are no salons now, and there never will be again, because, what with the ambitions and pretensions of men, the necessities of their careers, the obligations of the

struggle for life, the present age knows little of the artistic delight of allowing itself to be embodied or summed up in a woman. A drawing-room very soon becomes a sort of exchange for literary or sporting affairs, or the like. This does not imply that women should neglect to avail themselves of artistic or intellectual resources for their own personal behoof; but it will certainly be recognised that a real courage is needed if they are to rise superior to tittle-tattle, the slang of market or stable, the stuff they read, the things they hear. Happy are the societies where one can still enjoy life, and think! Happy the man who makes art unawares![1]

Yet, without ruling salons, women may still exercise in intellectual matters a guiding influence truly indispensable. Instead of allowing themselves to fall a prey to puffery, claptrap, or scandal, why should they not, on the contrary, treat as personal enemies the men who only use their undoubted talents to wanton with them, to flaunt everywhere their nudities and show off the slaves of their lust?—why smile upon pinchbeck rufflers, geniuses of Montmartre and the Latin Quarter? It is self-constituted slavery to bow in-

[1] [In the original, "*qui fait de la prose sans le savoir*," a reminiscence of Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, act ii. scene 4: "*Il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien.*"]

cessantly at the feet of fashion. Always the fashion ! A play is bad : don't go to see it, and tell people so. A poem is a medley of unintelligible catch-words, a rigmarole of sonorous nothings ; have the courage, to say that it defies comprehension, and that *your* mind loves lucidity ! We all need our courage : this is yours. Nobody wants you to shoulder a rifle : you are asked to read or not to read, to see or not to see. If need be, effect a grand spring-cleaning ! You alone can destroy the literature of the music-hall and the casino, the trashy novelettes that ravage the meanest hamlets worse than alcohol. Is this courage beyond your strength ? Do you fancy yourself compelled, in a fit of democratic fervour, to fuddle yourself on the vile rinsings retailed a few steps away from your respectable dwelling ? Why then do you nourish your spirit on things that no one would dare to retail in the open air ? Nobody would suggest that you should pass your life in preaching ; a light or even a fatuous remark is not likely to offend. But for pity's sake insist that people wash their hands before entering your doors. Many a great personage whom you invite to dinner and make much of, would be wearing a livery and displaying his calves in your entrance-hall if he had remained an honest man. Dare to face and to exult in things that are true and serious. Diffuse their

fragrance around you. You are responsible for the books that strew your table.

What a power you would have at command if you acted resolutely in the interests of beauty! The whole world would lay down its arms at your feet. The sentiment of the Beautiful is so strong! "To fathom the dreams of poets is the true philosophy," said a philosopher.[1] "The mind of the savant lingers upon phenomena; the soul of the poet essays a higher flight, his inward vision pierces to the heart of reality. If the final knowledge is that which attains, not the surface, but the foundations of being, the poet's method is the true one."

Wherefore, surround yourself at any rate with men who have the taste for rendering life musical; in your conversations encourage clear, clean, warm images, refinements of sentiment rather than tricks of style; spread abroad an air of sincerity, cheerfulness, polish, and, above all, reverence. Your door is not that of a church, but neither is it that of a market.

Some women are too subservient to men of distinction, or so reputed; they imagine them upon a higher plane than they really are, and especially more difficult to influence. The majority of men, foolish or eminent, obscure or famous, reck

[1] M. Izoulet. [2] M. Souriau.

little of grand sentiments, and are satisfied with a modicum of illusion or suggestion; they are led by means quite infantile, provided they are carried out of themselves.

Have you sometimes pondered our extraordinary faculty for self-detachment, whenever we actively employ our imagination—if we are reading a novel, for instance? We delight in being duped; we want to see and hear everything, we fancy ourselves assisting at scenes where the novelist himself declares no one was present. Thus, as has been said by a very clever writer,[1] we identify ourselves so thoroughly with the adventures of Pierre Loti, that on the day when M. Julien Viaud, naval officer, was received into the bosom of the Academy, the whole assembly, though so fastidiously select, thought they were really beholding Monsieur Loti.

The art of the novelist consists in riveting our attention on the scenes he depicts. M. Loti, for instance, to whom I have just referred, has admirably painted the sea, but he has not sought to exalt it to a level with us; he has lent to it neither ideas nor will, sadness nor ecstasies; but he has marvellously felt, and caused us to feel, the solemnity of its multitudinous and changeless life, its invincible weight, its aimless perturbation, and it

[1] M. Henry Michel, in *Le Temps*, April 9, 1892.

is in this way that he has so powerfully impressed us.

Well, your art is similar. You need not trouble about your merits or ours, but solely about the effect you can produce on us, who love to be duped. Acknowledge this as a guiding principle; for it is easier to regulate illusions than realities.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE ART OF SELF

> "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun . . . for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."—ECCLESIASTES, ix. 8–10.

To put the matter in a nutshell, woman is the heart of the home. Apart from her it is lifeless machinery; she alone keeps it going.

The æsthetic object, then, to which it behoves us to devote our special care, is woman.

I do not propose to furnish you, Madam, with toilet specifics, or to set up an unequal rivalry with your tailor or corset-maker. And yet the art of personal charm is so much inwrought with high philosophy, that you will forgive me, perhaps, for tapping gently at the door of your inner chamber, in the calm, philosophic attempt to justify some few precepts.

This, to begin with: the prettiest dress is one

that escapes remark, and yet makes the most of its wearer.

There is a certain natural elegance, as becoming to a woman as blossom to a tree, and quite able to dispense with assistance from too obtrusive an art. The marks of a true great lady are, as we know, simplicity and kindliness.

Who could take seriously a doll, a nonentity, whose pocket gapes behind her if that be the fashion, or who has no pocket at all; deprived of the use of her arms by the pinching or the puffing of her sleeves, and still less mistress of her legs, to whose use she is unaccustomed? A man may amuse himself with her, or find amusement through her; but have any manner of confidence in her, never!

On the other hand, too many women professedly serious assert their virtue by an untidiness of appearance most distressing to the eye, pleading that beauty of soul is all-sufficient. Such sexless dowdies you may see dusting their dear vicar's vestry, or rolling in certain carriages through our streets. Surely they come short in a rigorous social duty when they exhibit virtue or maturity under aspects so forbidding.

The Gospel nowhere says, "Blessed are they that change not their linen." I grant you that the body is not everything; but neither, surely, is it

absolutely nothing. It is a beautiful object, to be respected. Without it we should never have been born, nor should we possess any means of expressing our ideas. Body and spirit are partners in a strange association; they are the closest of friends. If we happen to be at all out of sorts, do we feel that our minds are free?

The body, then, must be taken for better or worse, as the medium of our relations with the external world. Your attire, Madam, ought to signify that your attitude is neither prudish nor familiar, but that, being a woman—in other words, the physical representation of charm—you are performing your true function, matching your tastes with your years like well-paired horses.

"Oh!" you exclaim, "that's a lesson not likely to suit my husband's taste. He, surely, is the person I must please—principally, at all events. Well, a proof of how very far I am from despising my modest charms is that I spend a good deal on my wardrobe; indeed, he tells me that I spend too much. What *am* I to do, then? for there is no middle course; one must either dress or not dress; I defy you to escape that dilemma. Very well; how am I to dress if you won't let me buy the dress that's being worn, or go to a respectable milliner for my hats?"[1]

[1] O. Gréard.

There is something in your objection; you must indeed dress! But I am not much impressed with your phrase "the dress that's being worn." Why this subjection—in my humble opinion carried a little too far? Ah! I should like to see the Chief Commissioner of Police ordaining the cut of your dresses, or the Pope, say, decreeing by encyclical whether you might wear feathers in your hats, or little birds, claws and all! What law is there, what penalty if you disobey? The law is that a dress must suit your own individuality; and the penalty, that certain hats will disfigure you.

Yet there is something to be said for fashion. For one thing, it is a signal for renewing the wardrobe, and so is good for trade; without it one might be tempted to effect many surreptitious economies! A second point, and a still more serious one, is that it satisfies the eye æsthetically, the corollary being that a thing has no sooner gone out of fashion than it seems ridiculous; while, conversely, such few objections as are raised against the mode of the day are timid and hesitating. All this is very true, and the natural consequence is extremely disagreeable. It has happened, when certain pronounced styles have been in vogue, that the streets seemed full of nothing but perambulating costumes: all the women were absolutely, indistinguishably, alike.

"Well," you reply, "that, at any rate, keeps us from dreaming about flounces and furbelows, and making undue calls on our imagination. Don't we spend enough time, as it is, at the dressmaker's and the shops? Do you want us to be bond-slaves to vanity every minute of the day—to do nothing but think of our fal-lals? That was all very well, perhaps, in quiet, aristocratic times—for your great Renaissance ladies, let us say. But we have no time for that sort of thing nowadays." No time! Excuse the shadow of a smile. Sleeping or waking, every woman's mind keeps a corner free for her toilet; and 'tis fortunate it is so! The uniformity of our masculine costumes is so terrible a brand of decadence and ennui.

Dress, however, is not a mere matter of imagination or whim. It has incontestable principles, which it would be a mistake to disregard.

There is, first of all, the principle of verticality.

A woman, as every one will admit, is a vertical creature who moves horizontally. From this characteristic proceeds her rank in the scale of being.

In all ages, and among all races, the mountain peak has been regarded as a thing of beauty, a neighbour of the stars, a friend to high thought and divine loneliness; whilst horizontal lines are

typical of earthliness, dependence, humbleness even. So, in regard to dress, ladies may be divided into two schools: the perpendicular school, with something of the dignity of a frowning rock, and the horizontal school, seemingly ever on the point of dropping on their knees — though to kneel is sometimes a source of comfort, perhaps of strength.

Vertical lines, when they can be supported without an appearance of stiffness or angularity, produce the most pleasurable impression, provided they are softened by a delicate roundness of figure; and the effect is completed by a lofty hat surmounting a studied and expressive arrangement of the hair. Colours, too, have their moral significance, and should be matched with the colours of the soul, as indeed is done in the case of mourning, ostensibly because black cannot fade: as though only our buried feelings were immortal! In olden days black was the colour of constancy, and white was the mourning colour, the symbol of an empty, loveless heart; red betokened joy; blue, a peaceable and quiet mind; yellow or golden, an energetic temperament.

Every one of us knows the importance of the right choice of materials, as regulated by considerations of age, the seasons, the time of day, and the different effects desired.

Some materials are dull and sober, and others bright; soft, filmy, luminous muslins, and severe or stately velvets, cloths suggestive of dignity and comfort, and demanding the tailor's art. All these stuffs multiply a woman; yet beneath all her various habiliments she must needs preserve her individuality. Between dress and wearer there is a general proportion which should never vary, and, above all, the characteristic accent, so to speak, of her costume should always remain the same.

The general practice of carefully bisecting a woman—that is, of garbing the bust as the nobler part of the body, following its contours more or less closely, while burying the lower part of the body in a skirt shaped like a bell and not a little ungainly—this practice is one which we should certainly never dare to condemn. But the Greeks, those great lovers of pure beauty, regarded the several parts of the human form as equally worthy of adornment; and in the East, to this day, their ideas on this matter are opposed to our own. The principle underlying our notions of clothing claims a religious and ideal basis—a principle of artificial and subtle gradation, that aims at evoking an ascending scale of effects from heel to head, and at concentrating the attention chiefly on the eyes and hair, which on this theory acquire

a legitimate importance. But it also gives rise to many disadvantages.

In any case, it is an exceedingly mischievous principle to make the skirts too full, and still more, to increase their dilatation by means of bustles or other deplorable subterfuges; mischievous is it, too, to lengthen the waist or to emphasise the line of cleavage: the result is a total loss of harmony. The attempt has sometimes been made to combine upper and lower parts into one pleasing whole, especially by means of Watteau mantles. In truth, the best plan is to separate them as little as possible, and, since there must be petticoats, to attend more particularly to the underwear, avoiding undue distention of the skirt, and above all being scrupulously careful not to load it with special trimmings, such as frills and flounces, which the bodice does not suggest, or to give it an appearance of detachment by brighter colours.

The result of the concealment of the lower limbs has been to give the boot a vast importance. A pretty foot suggests pretty hands, and helps the mind to grasp the unity of the person.

The bodice, unquestionably, has been for a long time invested with exaggerated importance. The collarets and ruffs of the sixteenth century, so fashionable at the present moment, produce an effect of short-neckedness, though also of dignity.

On the other hand, leg-of-mutton sleeves (the name alone tells how much the thing is worth) are totally wanting in monumental character. Why not have more confidence in the beauty of the arm? Devices for the improvement of ill-shaped arms are obviously defensible; but the arm has great possibilities of distinction; it delineates the gesture and is an index of the will; gloves and a fan are excellent adjuncts; and its shapely curves and contours, terminated by a dainty wrist, constitute a real attraction.

In a word, all that a woman wears, everything that she uses, should in a sense be wedded to her, and bring out her personality. One little detail to finish with. The watches of the present day are pitiful objects, always circular and uniform and commonplace. In days of old they were jewels; there are still in existence watches of all shapes, in the form of boxes, crosses, bowls, lilies, and so on. Might we not revert to this pretty idea, of making all our belongings personal?

No doubt these preoccupations as to dress and toilet may appear futile, and even paltry, as indeed they are if they are inspired merely by the futile and paltry spirit we call vanity. But there is a sacred form of vanity, which does not aim at being beautiful for one's own personal gratification, but recognises that beauty has a considerable

influence in this world, and that in exercising its ministry one is accomplishing a divine, and, so to say, a sacerdotal work.

This is no exaggeration. What the Ecclesiast called a lamp burning upon a golden candlestick has become, for Christian æsthetics, a divine manifestation, or, adopting Cardinal Bembo's phrase, the reflection, the *influsso* of God, through the medium of a woman's face! God, Madam, has set His seal upon you, and has said to you, "Lo, this is what the whole world shall sing: Behold the symbol of the world, the unity and proportion of form, the harmony and, so to speak, the love of the members one for another. All is love in thee, and thy whole body seemeth a strain of music, uplifting us towards the divine." I am borrowing St. Augustine's words. And St. Bernard also invites you to cherish the flesh, with sobriety, with a certain spiritual temperance, so that you may bear worthily the seal of God.

All things become admirable from the moment you seek to glorify, not yourselves, but in you and by you the universal beauty. One could not do better in this connection than to quote St. Augustine again. He carries his enthusiasm so far as to declare that the Creator, in fashioning man's bodily frame, preferred beauty to necessity; "for," he adds, "necessity must pass away, but

a time will come when we shall enjoy beauty alone, each other's beauty, without impure desire. And for this cause we should more especially glorify the Creator, to whom the Psalmist says, 'Thou art clothed with beauty and honour.'"[1]

Seek beauty, then; I do not say seek her frantically, but frankly, sincerely—permit me to say, bravely. Make your whole existence, in the words of the Apostle, "a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service," since the end set before it is to shed beauty around you—a holy end, that ennobles all things.

The true, pure beauty is beauty of soul, just as the truest love has no taint of sensuality. Learn then the meaning of the phrase "Be beautiful." It means that physical charm must concur, but concur merely, in the ultimate production of beauty.

A very common prejudice, often besetting the most brilliant minds, regards art as almost inevitably destined to become immoral, æstheticism as a Pagan creed, and Christianity as based upon the mortification of the flesh. To me that theory seems extravagant, and, in truth, somewhat degrading. It is my belief that life is ennobled when it is lifted a degree above the utilitarian

[1] *City of God*, Book xxii.

morality, that beauty is the consecration of existence, and its supreme perfection, and that this truth has been clearly brought out by the Christian distinction between æstheticism and sensualism. To relegate the body to its due place is right; to suppress it would be wrong, because it is the instrument of our life, and our guide towards beauty.

The ancient Greeks, no doubt, carried their worship of beautiful form to extremes—so far, indeed, that instead of our modern agricultural shows, devoted to the improvement of cows and carrots, they had competitions of various kinds for the improvement of the human race. We apparently go to the other extreme by striving mainly for the deterioration of the race; and how it happens that so much daintiness of figure and refinement of feature is still left to us, is a question to be asked.

To seek for the ultimate beauty in the purely physical life would clearly be an error, and what is more, a culpable error. What we are in love with, after all, is our love; and, if we will only admit it, the mere illusion suffices, from the moment it responds to our desires. There is nothing in the least paradoxical or transcendental in this notion; it is a matter of daily experience. Is it necessary to our enjoyment of a picture to

believe that it is not a picture? What fascinates us in a landscape is less Nature than our dream of Nature; not that which we see, but that which we feel and imagine. It is not Nature that we love, but the emotion she produces in us, the manner in which she beautifies reality by her plays of light and shade.

It may be acknowledged also that a woman, however much beloved, is only a pretext; our true gain is the ideal world of which she is the centre, and which we possess of inalienable right. And the conclusion is, that Beauty has a real existence only if we know how to profit by it; otherwise it is but "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." Are you beautiful, Madam, in the absolute sense of the word? I know not; indeed, I care not. One thing, and one alone, is important: the impression you make. Bend over the edge of a pool and see your image; it is only an illusion, yet there it is. I am the pool in which you are reflected. In clear and unruffled serenity I hold your perfect image; but if you disquiet me, your image will be distorted and bedimmed.

Not the physical explanation of beauty, but the fact, the perception of beauty, is our concern. To quote St. Augustine once again: "There are two beauties," he says: "the one, that which our

judgment approves; the other, that which thrills us"[1]—in other words, which we love, and which, if you will, may be called charm. How does a woman with no pretensions to beauty thrill us, enthrall us? It is hard to give a scientific explanation. "Thou art not a man comely of form, thou art not of much wisdom, thou art not noble of birth," said one of his monks to St. Francis of Assisi; "yet all men run after thee."[2] But St. Francis gave himself freely to his fellows, and probably the charm exercised by certain women springs in no slight measure from the same source. They have a wealth of expression, and in consequence communicate something of their moral personality. Every impressionable person makes an impression on others; the influence is reflex and reciprocal.

The redness or pallor of the cheeks, the brightness or dimness of the eyes, touch sympathetic chords. There are some eyes which stir our being to its depths, and whose glances are ample solace for all our woes. Gesture and bearing also have their importance; mere details possess a force; silky hair, for instance, even on aged people, gives us a wonderful impression of gentleness.

[1] *Confessions*, Book iv. cap. xiii.
[2] *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, cap. x.

And it is curious that a man's gesture and bearing exert an influence on the man himself. The Jesuits show a profound knowledge of the human machine when, in their 'Exercises,' they recommend a heedful attention to the attitude of prayer; to kneel, and clasp the hands, and close the eyes, are matters of no trivial concern. They affect the onlooker, but they affect also the person kneeling.

We must attain, then, a certain degree of mastery over the physical expression of the emotions. Yet the most winsome faces will be those on which the emotions are freely portrayed; the faces of some women have a mobility that is at once delightful and discomposing, but so expressive that one flash is as eloquent as Bossuet, with an eloquence to which all the senses contribute.

A woman is also judged by her favourite scent, or by her voice. One has an organ like an auctioneer's; another speaks in a musical ripple, turning all the various inflexions of a wide register to exquisite account, and stealing into a conversation with crystalline notes, low, grave, caressing, affecting us marvellously.

In the sixteenth century, the French mode of greeting a lady was to kiss her cheek or lips; at a later time the hand was kissed; nowadays the

American hand-grip prevails. This is a pity, for the modern hand-clasp means very little. Whereas every pleasant contact is a caress; among all living creatures, from the highest to the lowest—from the cats and the donkeys, which rub against each other to the apes which caress their offspring with a rough gentleness — every sentiment of affection has its accompanying physical contact, which becomes, so to speak, its natural consecration.

A woman, then, should never offer her hand unless intending a graceful or kindly act, and to every hand so offered men's lips should be applied with a sentiment of affection or respect. To kiss hands was in olden days the general custom of the Italians—a custom they turned so pleasantly to account that women, even, could, with an exquisitely tender art, kiss the hand of a greybeard or a man they wished to honour, without wounding his feelings. The populace were ever ready to kiss the hem of one's garment, and it was thought quite a natural thing to kiss the Pope's toe. It is a pity that these refinements in the art of touch have entirely disappeared.

But we cannot dwell on all these little problems; let us resume them in a single word: A woman's charm consists in the art of making all intercourse with her agreeable.

In other words, the essence of physical charm is actually a moral charm.

And this leads us to a further conclusion: Not only is charm something quite distinct from physical beauty, but it is open to question whether beauty as such really ministers to charm,—indeed, whether it does not sometimes detract from it; for it is a weapon, Madam, of which you are not absolutely mistress,—a sword of fire, that burns the hand. It seems at first sight to make everything so easy; but a woman would greatly err in trusting to the strength of a purely material stimulus, shutting her eyes to the fact that such a source of excitement is not particularly flattering, and soon leads to practical results which speedily transgress the limits of art. Even with her own husband a woman ought to eschew this kind of influence, and to make her chief preoccupation that which survives the brilliance of the epidermis, or such brilliance as ribands and stuffed birds afford.

It behoves her, then, to foster the expression of her soul: this is the formula of physical charm—to seize her visitors by a general air of brightness and sincerity. A girl may sit stiff, with silent lips, showing but her profile or quarter-face, her inner life a closed book to you. But her mother, her fine figure

still retaining something of its compactness, should give you her full face, and sit in comfortable amplitude, with parted knees and free arms, the look in her eyes rather deep than reticent, or lost in her own inward visions, her lips savourous and alive—lips that have tasted of life, and sip at it still with something of a regretful disenchantment.

"When thou fastest, anoint thine head," said the Master. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

In general, women attach rather too much importance to an expression of good-humour. Genuine cheerfulness is a sort of physical expansion; the circulation is quickened, the cheeks glow, the eyes shine, the head is held high and the figure erect. All this is excellent, but does not necessarily result in establishing a sympathetic connection.

Nor does laughter; though to some folk the facile universal laugh is charming. But the contortions of laughter are extremely ugly, to say nothing of its aggressiveness. We dread to weep; but what more beautiful than eyes moist with tears? Nature herself follows up laughter with tears, to soften and obliterate it. Were I to speak my whole mind, I should dare to say

that men are made for laughter, and women for tears.

The smile is quite a different thing from the laugh : a gentle streamlet, rather than a bursting flood. Do not confuse this with the stereotyped grin of idiots, or with the conventional smirk of a woman who fancies that grimace is grace. The true smile, silent, reserved, more common with children and the aged than with people in full vigour of life, is a measured expansion, a state rather than an act. It dwells more particularly in the eyes, which then become soft, and clear, and deep.

Women's greatest ornament is enthusiasm ; there are some who, under its transfiguring, quickening radiance, remain admirably young and fascinating to an age when beauty would be out of the question ; it is good to see their sweet faces, and eyes beaming with warmth and kindness and a sort of divine intoxication. Some enjoy an inward vitality which at times gives them wings. Like you and me, they come into contact with mundane things, handle them, employ and govern them ; yet always without subjection to them. And the singular thing is that these women, setting no store on the details of life, are the women who make us love them most.

The opposite type is the woman who is crushed by her environment, the slave of circumstance. She tries to appear a valorous rebel against the restraints of life by affecting piquant little acts of mutiny, which leave an impression of nervous debility; and her reward is to be called insipid, tiresome, an utter bore.

No art, no genius, no charm has such eloquence and beauty as the woman so well attempered as to have mastery of life, to appear unconscious of its only too real thorns, and I will even say, to exercise serene sway over the ruck of human appetites ever thronging so close about her. No religion is loftier, no science more profound, than that which inspires the consolidation of all members of society, noisy, glittering, or wretched, into one synthesis of goodness.

The strong, good woman is the supreme manifestation of art; she holds the secret of life; she is the flower and crown of the world.

At once enthusiastic and practical, active and gracious, she carries with her a subtle atmosphere of sweetness and strength. There is nothing of the virago about her; sometimes, indeed, her outward aspect may be delicate, timid. But a look from her, the sound of her voice, pierces us through; that light and gentle hand of hers, which seems made

but for kisses, shapes our destiny, and we are surprised to feel thrilling within us chords hitherto mute.

If we were animals and nothing more, all these details would escape us. The animal is susceptible of physical suggestion, can even enjoy the sense of illusion; but it has no understanding of art, because it lacks the imagination necessary to complete its impressions.

Art, as we have remarked, is at bottom only a creation of the spectator's imagination. A picture, a strain of music, would be nothing but colour and noise were not their effect to stir our imagination, which does the rest. A ruin carefully restored, and therefore no longer appealing to the imagination, might as well not be. Woman, likewise, would be but a concourse of atoms, unless by her imitative genius and her power of conveying impressions she touched our imagination, and suggested to it the sense of a larger life. Imagination is, so to speak, a peptone, assisting the mind's digestion, and furthering the assimilation of its food. Women minister to our imagination, assisting thus towards our digestion of life.

I employ this somewhat prosaic figure intentionally, in the hope of heightening the credit of the imagination, which is accused of not being

practical, and is in consequence disdained. Yet it is most necessary to hold it in right estimation, for its effects are incontestable. The chronicles of our land, in particular, are filled with the follies or the acts of heroism to which the imagination has impelled us; and not so very long ago we were able to regard it as the queen of our society.

In the days when passing strangers, instead of visiting the drains, the 'Metropolitain,' or other useful, but as a rule subterranean, objects, made pious pilgrimage to the bedroom of Madame Récamier, that bedroom clearly played an important part in the destinies of France. In those days, Frenchwomen received homage from the whole world, and especially from Englishmen. An Englishman named Trotter wrote that the Frenchwoman seemed born "to make man's life a dream of happiness, in which flowers spring up around his footsteps, while the very air he breathes is perfumed." Pinkerton speaks glowingly of the Parisienne, "who, in spite of her frank ways and her liberty to form real friendships, is none the less a model wife and mother." "It would take months and years," writes Miss Plumptre, "to discover how many amiable and honourable women there are in Paris." Sociability, gaiety, kindliness, the general

desire to charm and be charmed—these, along with a few saving defects, are the distinctive features of a society so ruled. All this is born of the imagination, but imagination has never been inconsistent with intelligence or courage.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

MODESTY

"A shamefast woman is grace upon grace."
—Ecclesiasticus xxvi.

"That man which glories in his raiment is like unto a robber that glories in the brand of iron wherewith he is branded, since it was Adam's sin that rendered garments necessary."
—St. Bernard.

"They are the veil that hideth our shame."
—St. Thomas of Aquinas.

The active employment of the imagination obeys, in the social world, a number of special rules, known as the laws and customs of polite society—a sort of administrative code not unlike the railway time-table: a compost of morality, fashion, and settled habits, with no logic, necessarily, to boast of. A woman who should nowadays receive her friends in her dressing-room in the morning, as was done in the sixteenth century, would be a laughing-stock, while it is thought quite right and proper for her to go out to dinner in the evening with very bare shoulders, the cynosure of footmen's eyes, or to dance with any Tom, Dick, or Harry. This distinction is beyond me. Endless similar points will

occur to you. However, though we may not defy the code of etiquette, we can at all events discuss it ; and indeed, it forms a fruitful subject for meditation. Unhappily, it is too vast a theme to deal with here, especially as the first law of etiquette is not to debate it in writing. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a summary treatment of one of the elementary actions demanded by the proprieties—the action of clothing oneself.

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Why do we dress ? A very ridiculous question, says some one, and of no earthly interest, for the whole world is unanimous on the point, except the savages. Not at all : the answers of civilised people to the question exhibit a considerable variety, and that is a fact of high importance in regard to modes of dress.

The utilitarians, the realists, the evolutionists, all pretty much in evidence at the present time, say that we clothe ourselves as a matter of utility, to avoid rain and cold and the bites of insects. In a happy land where to be covered was not obligatory, and no one wore clothes, to go naked would be neither more shocking nor more inartistic than to be dressed. It is a mere matter of physical conservation.

Religion introduces a new element. To the Christian the question is one of moral conservation: clothing dissembles and cloaks the flesh; by concealing it from sight and defending it from touch, raiment fortifies our weakness, and forms almost a part of our individuality; to deprive us of it would involve us in peril, or at least in shame and decadence. In this connection St. Bonaventure likens a monk in secular attire to a layman without clothes,[1] and fancies that he has gone the extreme length of opprobrium.

Needless to add that to every pious soul the bodily functions appear base beside those of the reason, and that, consequently, it is not for us to make our boast in them. As a matter of fact we affect to ignore them all—except the act of eating (I know not why, for to swallow food is no nobler than any other of our physical feats, and yet we do our best to lend it grace, and meet to perform it in company); and on this point Christianity and æsthetics coincide.

To lovers of beauty dress is an art, as well as a physical or moral necessity. They do not don raiment merely to keep off the cold or to dissemble the flesh, but, on the contrary, to set themselves off to the best advantage, in virtue of a certain æsthetic and purely sentimental instinct called

[1] *The Mirror of Discipline.*

modesty. Every animal, they say, shows a rudimentary trace of this instinct, even the dog, which at certain times feels it incumbent on him to fling up earth behind. Modesty is like a thermometer of more or less exquisite sensibility; and the proof that it is an instinct, depending rather on the æsthetic sense than on pure reason, is that it is much more delicate with creatures of pure sensibility—young girls, for instance—than with men. It is innate, and not acquired; cold reason and the wear and tear of life tend to destroy rather than to develop it; and a close physiological relation has been observed to exist between the sense of modesty and the physical sensibility of the feminine organs.

Modesty has for its end, not to cover up beauty or to raise obstacles to its effect, which is love, but to give to beauty all possible scope for the production of this effect. It musters defensive forces, then, against two contingencies: first, the case where the subject, the soul of the beholder, is not duly prepared to conceive love; secondly, the case where the object, namely, the beauty in question, is in itself too imperfect to evoke love. I will say, then, adopting terms in current use, that modesty is an instinct, either of sensibility or of coquetry.

It follows that in principle there is nothing

degrading in the exhibition of the beauty of the body; rather the reverse: when the body is beautiful, we find Fénelon, for instance, as a critic of art, praising a statue of Venus in all sincerity, because it is "a thorough Venus."

Now, Christian metaphysic[1] comes strongly to the reinforcement of this position in professing that our bodies will rise one day in a glorified state, that is, in a state of pure form, in ethereal radiance and beauty, exempt from the serviceable organs of the flesh; they will live thenceforth on love, and diffuse pure love around them. It is curious that the science of to-day tends to confirm these ideal anticipations. It asserts that the human being is composed of conglomerate microbes, more or less considerable, controlled more or less thoroughly by him, and retained or eliminated by a host of means almost unsuspected, such as contiguity, attractions, sensations; yet not belonging indefeasibly to him, but living for themselves. The human form that God has given to this machine of which we have the enjoyment, is almost the only physical possession really our own; and truly there is something uplifting and beautiful in the doctrine that, while all these microbes will escape from us, to resume their life elsewhere, our form will live on, subject to no change, divested of physical mechan-

[1] See St. Thomas of Aquinas on St. Matthew xxii.

ism, divested even, if I may say so, of intellectual mechanism, that is, of the faculty of reason, but whole and complete in point of sensibility and the capacity for joy.

Thus our physical being is our form, and it is possible to conceive of an ideal life in which this form, exquisite, flawless, should awaken blameless admiration. Unhappily, such a state is hardly possible in this present life ; hence modesty comes to the aid of æsthetics. Beauty must needs evoke love ; otherwise, the sight of it constitutes a sort of profanation. Such deshabilles as we see sometimes, utilitarian or sensual, clearly have none but a fleshly value, and are degrading.

Clothing, then, is to be a defence against everything that is not lawful and perfect love. But it may minister, in rightful subordination, to beauty. True beauty being rare, art always implies careful selection and assortment. Heaven is only distinguishable from the earth because it hides something from our view. What could be less pleasing than the lowlands of the North, or La Beauce—bare, flat, uninteresting, revealing themselves to the first glance ? How much fonder we are of the variety, the mystery, of the mountains, even of those that are easy of access ! If modesty were unknown, art would counsel us to invent it. Watch the methods of the great artists, those masters of witchery :

Vinci's delicate moulding of form, avoiding over-sharpness of definition, wrapping his figures in a soft chiaroscuro: Correggio's caressing touch, giving his forms an exquisite, luminous softness, drowned, we may say, in light, and appealing at once to sense and to emotion. Assuredly, art consists at all times in restraint, in suggesting more than it reveals; illusion, suggestion, pave the way for happiness, and perhaps contribute to it. And we can now understand the vast importance attaching to the sentiment of modesty: what an æsthetic force, what a form and pressure of attraction it represents, since the act of looking having a subtle touch of possession, it blends the idea of intimacy with those of mystery and privilege. To preserve your womanhood is to preserve your bloom, to consider your body itself as an object of worship, which at all times and in all circumstances it behoves to regard as beautiful. From the æsthetic standpoint, then, the raiment does not form part of our being; not in that does beauty dwell; but its mission is to companion with our physical person, to serve it, harmonise with it, do it the fullest justice, and give all possible finish to it by correcting its defects.

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Well, now, how are we to reconcile this spirit of modesty with the incivilities of life? Of the same clay, says the Apostle, the potter makes vessels of honour or of dishonour.[1] You favour women and girls with eulogies of purity, the sanctity of the body, and then——! Will not life's commonest experiences to-morrow flatly contradict this nobility of sentiments? You will yourselves declare impracticable what you were vaunting yesterday, and the upshot will be that, to the harshness of things as they are, you will but add one cruelty the more.

A troublesome question indeed; so troublesome that, for all its eminently practical character, the world prefers, as a rule, not to discuss it. It is passed over in significant silence. A woman of refinement will make a merit of never opening a medical book, and of being ignorant of the elements of what she ought really to know: she would just as soon have an undraped statue in her drawing-room. And yet, if her health give the slightest warning, suggest the slightest suspicion—

[1] [In the original, "*Il faut être dieu, table ou cuvette, comme dit le Fabuliste*," alluding to La Fontaine's fable of the sculptor and the statue of Jupiter, beginning—

"Un bloc de marbre était si beau
Qu'un statuaire en fit l'emplette.
Qu'en fera, dit-il, mon ciseau?
Sera-t-il dieu, table ou cuvette?"]

hesitate ? why should she hesitate ? It is her husband's wish, everybody does the same, and no one will know !

There are many virtuous wives, but very few chaste.

The very respect due to genuine science, and to the devoted pursuit of it, might well put us on our guard against certain abuses to which medicine is liable. But I shall not repeat M. Léon Daudet's scathing strictures in regard to doctors—the moral apprenticeship they serve to-day, their influence on women, and their conduct towards them.

In olden days, it was before their lackeys that great ladies knew no shame, because they did not look on them as being men at all. Yet that inveterate scandal-monger, Brantôme, relates that one day, when a lackey, on being interrogated by his lady, with all respect protested his neutrality, she retorted with a cuffing.

It had been the policy of the Middle Ages to fence in the medical profession with special safeguards : they pinned their faith to somewhat exceptional principles, and required doctors to be clerks, and consequently unmarried. A counsel of desperation indeed ! After all, a doctor is a man, and unquestionably you will knock up against him in life, talk to him, dine with him. Then, if you honour him with certain confidences, why should

you not consider him, not merely as a man, but as an intimate friend? As a matter of fact, there are logical women who find in these relations a very special tie.

. . . . . .

I do not say that you are doing wrong (we are discussing, not morals, but æsthetics); but I do think that every woman who respects herself, and has the honourable anxiety to please, ought not to pare away her charm, even of the physical order. Some women, through indifference, the utilitarian spirit, or even a tendency to mysticism, seem to fancy themselves to be women in some circumstances and not in others; they think that charm is a garment, to be put on and off at pleasure. Ah! you may put it off, but not put it on again. The preachers of all ages have thundered against the bared bosom; yet a modicum of coquetry perhaps contributes to the conservation of the human species, while certain grossnesses, scientific though they be, diminish it.

You will reply: "What is one to do? Do you fancy that *that* is a pleasure? We put up with it."

If so, it is only through prejudice. You have allowed it to be said that women are vain, useless things, and you believe it increasingly. Even in the traditional cases, you now regard women as

incapable of practising medicine, considering that only the direst poverty justifies recourse to them for tendance, and that nursing is not 'genteel'; whereas it is well known that they can bring the most brilliant talents to the study of medicine, and are peculiarly endowed with the special gifts of attention, gentleness, deftness of hand, sureness of memory. In Russia, even in Germany, an ever-widening field of medical work is opening before them; while in France, as in Turkey, the movement is all in the other direction, many ladies of fashion carrying naïveté so far as to believe that man alone is the universal monopolist of science, be it merely so much science as is required to turn on a shower-bath or direct a garden-hose. In these matters we must tell the truth even to girls; for our young daughters are interested nowadays in these practical questions!

For some years past the law has stepped in to strengthen and protect the monopoly of the doctors. The pettiest village leech of to-day stands forth as the embodiment of 'science,' and monopolises it—which is perhaps saying a good deal. To science liberty is the breath of life; yet, while no one talks more of liberty than the majority of doctors, their science is the only one that is deprived of it. A man may do anything he pleases, except manufacture lucifer matches or poultice a boil!

We have accomplished innumerable revolutions; yet in the sacred realm of physiology we are forbidden to know anything, though we be a Claude Bernard or a Pasteur.[1] Monopoly never forgives. It invokes not merely reason, but the proprieties. A professional man without a diploma is inconceivable. Can you imagine a woman with one? Really now, would it be decent for a woman to attend a man? Can you see her stooping over a medical work, assisting at a dissection, mixing with the hospital students? And do but think of her knowing them at home! So things will go on, with an heroic simplicity: the women who fancy themselves the pink of intelligence will continue to maintain that women are fit for nothing but to starve if they attempt to work; there is nothing wrong in this best of all possible worlds, and the preceding observations will appear ridiculous, and what is worse—irrelevant.

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From the purely artistic point of view, the power to blush is one of the most requisite and commendable of physical endowments. Old men are past blushing; very young children, idiots, and the lower animals cannot blush; but it appears that some tribes still on the outskirts of barbarism preserve

[1] Not being physicians, Claude Bernard and Pasteur were not at liberty to practise.

the faculty to an astonishing degree. The blush is a grace of life, a mark of vitality and of youthfulness. It betokens a great cerebral sensibility seconded by a perfectly sensitive skin. By a sort of instinct for personal defence, at the slightest attack—a word or a mere glance—there is a gush of energy : I say energy, and not emotion ; the heart beats no faster ; but a signal from the brain sends a rush of all the spare blood to the skin, and, owing to the congestion of the small blood-vessels, an extraordinary glow spreads over the face to the tips of the ear, to the roots of the hair, to the throat, sometimes even to the top of the bosom. Darwin saw the back of a young girl blush, and declares that in certain circumstances blushing may suffuse the whole body. It is as though the mind were hanging a curtain before the body, to assert its right of precedence. Fear and resignation manifest themselves differently : generally by a desire to hide. The child buries his face in his mother's skirts ; the ostrich tucks its head under its wing ; and in this sense it has been rightly said that "night knows no shame." To some people the darkness of night, or at any rate the precaution of closing their eyes, entirely modifies the impression of a thing upon them. But this, I repeat, savours of reckless self-abandonment.

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"Oh! could I but become a girl again for one hour!" cried a woman at a moment of frenzied passion. Her passion was not so frenzied but that she saw clear! No art, however exquisite, will ever be comparable to the frank, fresh, unspoilt grace of a modest girl.

Women can at least preserve a certain reserve of conduct: modesty of speech, to wit; modesty in the plays they see. No one would ask them, to be sure, to chase a dog from their dressing-room, like Madame de Staël; but the tactful grace with which a lady, even though no longer young, can elevate or gently restrain a conversation, is a relic of modesty, which still has a charm of no little sweetness, and insensibly draws us to her.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE HIGH CROSS

> "We err if we believe that we give ourselves what we refuse to others; to love ourselves overmuch is to love ourselves amiss. If you wish to be happy by yourself alone, you will never be happy; all men will dispute your happiness; but if you so act that all are happy with you, then the whole world will labour for your happiness."—MADAME DE LAMBERT.

WHEN they have once become the object of a sincere worship, all that is left for women to do is to be mothers.

Their life, compassed about with charm and respect, would be a snare to them if they believed themselves idols, and laboured for their own behoof. They are only an instrument of life, a means, not an end; hence both their greatness and their subjection.

For us too there is subjection in submitting to the influence of a woman, a condition of servitude wretched indeed if we had the woman alone for the object of our devotion. Woman's greatness is to complete us. The union of a man with a woman completes their moral, as it completes

their physical, existence. A woman only attains her full womanhood by her spiritual union with a man. Likewise to man a woman is necessary, and the influence of the charm to which he thus becomes subject represents in reality only the transformation and the extension of his intellectual being. To fancy that he loses anything is thus impossible.

If he resisted this charm, it would assuredly be to fall under some other influence, less natural or less necessary, from ambition down to those thousand and one slight influences that make up our life—novels, plays, newspapers, speeches, advertisements.

Maternity is the act by which a woman, with the sacrifice of herself, ceases to be the end and becomes a means—the act which develops her charm and influence into a living reality.

Maternity is the physiological response to physical suggestion—a glorious act, but essentially limited, since it is material. Moral charm likewise ought to result in a moral maternity; but this is nobler and vaster, and when the two maternities are found united in the state of marriage, the difference between them is immediately manifest: one would not think much of a mother who, wholly absorbed in physical cares, never troubled herself about the moral influence to be exercised on her

children. On the contrary, as time goes on, the material bond between mother and child is bound to grow slacker and slacker. Suckling itself is but a secondary act; providing spoon-meat is very different from suckling; and so the tie is continually loosened till the day when the child can do without her. But in proportion as the physical bond slackens, the moral bond ought but to grow firmer and stronger. The day your son is known for a brave, a brilliant, an honourable man, will you not feel more than ever his mother, with a deeper, an intenser feeling than when you nursed him at the breast?

The moral maternity and the physical maternity are so far independent, that the former is not limited by physical conditions; its potency increases rather than diminishes with age, and neither widowhood nor spinsterhood is inconsistent with it.

How is this moral maternity to be described? It consists in taking a man's intellectual acquirements and vivifying them with sentiment, or even in stirring emotions within the man, so as provoke an idea, and to assimilate it to themselves.

Further, a man's emotion needs to be renewed, sustained, fed, regulated in some sort by means of contacts, memories, hopes. Just as the productivity of an estate is multiplied a hundred-fold by good

cultivation—just as, with the advance of a country's civilisation, the sensibility and activity of its network of communications are enhanced—just as, the more money circulates, the more it produces: so, in a man cultivated, civilised, minted, so to speak, by a woman, the emotions develop and coalesce. Where one emotion has left a track, another will more easily make its way. But if the chain of emotions is allowed to break, they form a dead weight, and become a clog on life instead of a stimulus.

There are emotions that are active, and others that are depressing, or even deadening, such as resignation. All have their part to play, because life, if it is to produce anything, needs a direct, vigorous, concentrated activity, which is naturally followed and counterbalanced by an equivalent depression.

Hence, while a man of real virility may be said to throw out his search-light in all directions, like our great ironclads, woman, on the contrary, is the recipient of emotion, which she stores, and transforms, and endues with the elements of life in which it is lacking. She mingles a spiritual element with a love that would otherwise be sensual, and with the love of danger a love for higher things.

And thus this feminine art, which appears at

first sight all compact of peace and joy, turns out to be much deeper—the exercise of self-sacrifice and active goodness. Joys are not precluded, but at the cost of what an absolute yielding of self! This work of human redemption, which consists in taking upon oneself, and bearing as a sacred trust, the joys and woes of others, seems to be in reality a sort of crucifixion.

Thinking of all it implies, one fancies one sees, on the summit of a precipitous mountain, a gigantic cross. The shaft is made of the rough wood of the virile mind; upon it is stretched the quivering flesh of woman; all that remains is to inscribe above it "Behold our queen," and to pierce her heart. Then it may be said that what woman wills, God also wills.

I am aware that women may possibly desire rather to live for themselves, and that the awful grandeur of such a sacrifice affrights them. But they will never succeed in evading it; they needs must submit to it; were they to flee they would meet the Lord: "Lord, whither goest thou? *Quo vadis?*" And the Lord would make answer: "To the place ye are deserting!"

That is the law; and one can only recommend them to read the apologue of Jonah, so well related by Tolstoy:—

"The prophet Jonah, wishing to remain upright

and virtuous, withdraws himself from the companionship of wicked men. But God shows him that his duty as a prophet is to communicate to the perverse and foolish his knowledge of the truth, and so he ought not to shun these men, but rather to live in fellowship with them. Jonah, disgusted with the depravity of the inhabitants of Nineveh, flees from their city. But it is in vain that he shirks his vocation. By the agency of the whale God brings him back to Nineveh, and the will of God is accomplished: the Ninevites accept the law of God at the preaching of Jonah, and lead a better life. Far from rejoicing at having been made the instrument of God's will, Jonah waxes sullen, jealous of God's mercy towards the Ninevites, as though he would arrogate to himself alone the exercise of reason and goodness. He goes away out into the desert, and plunging into self-commiseration of his lot, hurls his reproaches against the Almighty. And then he sees, in the space of one night, a gourd springing up to shield him from the sun; the following night it withers away. Smitten by the heat, Jonah reproaches God still more bitterly for allowing the gourd that was so dear to him to perish. Then said the Lord: 'Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night:

and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?' Thy knowledge of the truth was only necessary that thou mightest impart it to those who knew it not."[1]

[1] Tolstoy, *My Religion*.

PART THE THIRD

THE FLOWER OF LIFE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

WOMEN MUST LEARN THEIR ART

> "One might sum up the rôle of women in two articles: to console the suffering, to aid the promising. They might well learn from youth up, if not to encourage, at any rate not to extinguish."—MADAME —— (a private letter).

THE spiritual maternity should have for its first effect the creation of better women. Some people are apt to believe that a woman can be improvised, and that her mission implies no preparation; others think that it is all-sufficient to give a girl a respectable governess. In reality, a woman can only form herself by living in close fellowship with another woman, who is, or becomes, her mother.

This is so much a part of the order of things that advantages accrue to both sides. St. Paul says somewhere that women are saved by their children; at all events, they are formed by them. For the mother, as for the daughter, the training of the child is the art of life in miniature; and when a Madame Necker, a Madame Roland, a Madame Necker de Saussure favour us in their letters with

accounts of the early days of their daughters—their tremors, and wiles, and playthings — their stories are more delightful than any novel. Madame d'Epinay, woman of the world as she was, gave the education of her daughter the first place in that herbal of her life, which she published under the title *Mes moments heureux.*

The method is a simple one. It consists essentially in respecting the freedom of the girls; aye, in launching them out into life without undertaking to repair any damage—in simply placing them in a good medium, favourable to a healthy development: the best education is to help them to be good and happy. Women, whatever the world may say, stand in just as much need as men, or even more, of probity, of a due sense of responsibility—in short, of all that we mean by 'character'; sometimes they are brought up on a restrictive and passive method because we fancy we are assuring peaceable and virtuous households by producing submissive or at least insignificant women. But it is of no use then deploring their insignificance, and obviously you cannot expect much from women if you have only taught them (adopting Fénelon's happy phrase) to walk with crutches.

So far back as the seventeenth century, a foreigner, the Princess Palatine, roundly charged French education with producing "nothing but

coquettes or bigots." Still, Madame de Maintenon (who was not revolutionary, nor even American, in her notions) insisted on the children of Saint-Cyr living "under an open sky," and she allowed them to go into the village to see the poor and the sick—in a word, to serve an apprenticeship to life.

Is it too much to recommend this system in place of that consisting in bringing up all children in one glass-house ?

Do you wish to make brave-hearted women—a sort of light cavalry of life ? Then show them life early. Don't you think that if boys were brought up with dolls and nurse-girls they too would have many pettinesses, and hypocrisies, and pusillanimities ? Frankness, simplicity, silence, love of work, modesty, gentleness, patience, soberness of judgment—these are the fundamental virtues to be fostered in women. You must allow simplicity in speech, naturalness in behaviour (even with a spice of petulance), no strait-lacing of soul or body (I continue to shelter myself behind the authority of eminent women, notably Madame de Maintenon) : fresh air, exercise, movement, ample dresses, hard beds, cold water all the year round ! And, more than all, preserve the spirit of originality. Routine is the great enemy to be feared, because idleness and

weakness so easily accommodate themselves to it. Habit is certainly a good thing : a nerve that has once conveyed a sensation is better able to recognise and convey it again. But, from the intellectual standpoint, habit must not be over-rated.

You cannot make bricks without straw: but the volubility of little girls, their wealth of movement, their vivacity and excitability, are somewhat over-abundant materials. Time, that great master, will be able to tame them; let us not interfere too much with them, and especially let us beware of slackening any chord of enthusiasm. It is impossible to accumulate too plentiful a store of youthfulness and freshness.

Nor should we fear to speak of the heart, to honour it, to acknowledge it as a woman's dominant force, since this is the truth: it is quite enough to hint at the claims of reason; and, if we have cause to fear a weediness of imagination, to bring frankly before them the facts of existence.

To learn a little cooking, something of law (along with a horror of chicane and a wholesome distrust of the courts), something of hygiene and botany, and even of medicine for women and children: such forms an excellent complement of the poetic and the ideal. "Do you want to bring up a crowd of female apothecaries, then"?

some one will say. Well, why not, if by means of some accomplishments of this kind a woman can diminish the hardships of her own private life, or at any rate multiply her charity? Such folk would be vastly astonished if we ventured to draw up here a list of the great women-apothecaries of the past: Anne de Beaujeu, Diane de Poitiers, Madame Necker, and a thousand more. In America, biology has an important place in the education of women; and charming women are to be found banding themselves together in the service of the sick. Let me mention Madame de Maintenon once more in this connection, and remark that she intrusted to the elder of her pupils the care of the little ones, as well as various duties of the home.

It will be obvious, however, that we should not desire to urge women to study the exact sciences: that is not their forte, even in an elementary sense; and it would be just as harmful to quench their sensibility in a flood of so-called technical knowledge, as it is to ruin the intelligence of young men therein. All that we advocate is some few notions, absolutely practical in character, useful, of assured application, and at the same time likely to serve as a solid counterpoise to the forces of enthusiasm.

Moreover, all that we have said about the value

of the æsthetic environment applies essentially to the education of girls. It is a matter of the first importance to have an eye to the beauty of the objects surrounding them or used by them, to teach them to see the beautiful side of everything, to encourage travel; to teach them history with the same purpose in view, in other words, not to be content with showing them this or that historical monument, or drumming into them dates and terminology, but to lead them gently into the flower-gardens of nature or ideas, for at bottom the best philosophy in such cases is a philosophy of travel and history: by such means as these do we learn to compare and to judge.

Go to the sea: the water is so fair and kind a counsellor. The sea enters very largely into the Gospel history, and the first disciples were chosen from among the fishers. Go and see a fine church, a grand palace, a picture gallery: these are the joys of the human intelligence; with them you live in the midst of all the noblest fruits the past and the present have produced, among things eternally beautiful. To see man, the creature of a day, is a much less urgent matter.

Intelligent girls may proceed from this experimental philosophy of æstheticism to theories of æsthetics or psychology.

Theology is a stern science. But a practical

religion as formulated by the Catechism, and healthy religious aims and ideals, nourished by the direct reading of the Scriptures, form the corner-stone of every system of feminine education. Women would be good for nothing—would have neither a part to play nor a mission to fulfil, without a spiritual faith. The art of life consists precisely in rising superior to matter. Women can never arm themselves too thoroughly with the Christian faith; it is their palladium; never can they too thoroughly equip themselves for its defence. Does this mean that they should adapt themselves to all kinds of wile and trickery? 'No,' answer friends of theirs who are above suspicion — Vivès, Madame de Maintenon, Fénelon: the world asks of them just the reverse.

For girls, as for boys, education as commonly understood is finished at about the age of sixteen or seventeen. And then, while the brothers proceed to devote themselves to special studies, what will the sisters do?

Look around for a husband! Marriage is for the most part a question of *amour propre;* yet I cannot see that it is any more discreditable to a woman than to a man to marry late, or even not to marry at all. As a matter of fact, all a woman's actions, gestures, words, thoughts, converge upon the one fixed idea—marriage.

That being so, should she prepare for marriage as an association of two persons equal though different, or as a state of subjection? The second alternative has, in the present state of our manners and customs, fallen somewhat into discredit; in former days it was regarded as a dogma. The girl of old was brought up in solitude, in a state of nature, as St. Thomas of Aquinas put it, and at the age of twelve she meekly received from her parents her lord and master. An artist of the fifteenth century, a man of liberal ideas—Philarete—who amused himself by writing a book (still unpublished) on the symbolism of things, recommended that girls should be dressed in green, should not be allowed to go out of doors except to church, should be taught a little music and dancing, and provided with a dowry at the earliest possible moment.[1]

These ideas, which simplify matters exceedingly, always find supporters. Some German philosophers in particular, persuaded of the inaneness of feminine culture, even in an æsthetic direction, are foremost in professing that women had better not bother their heads with it.

But in France, tradition gives to women the place of honour; and indeed, among the masses, perhaps even elsewhere, the wives are often better

[1] MS. of the Magliabecchiana at Florence.

bred than their husbands. Among the upper classes, the wife in the majority of cases has the money, and the liberty resulting from this circumstance, and from our manners, frequently represents to many young ladies the principal attraction of marriage.

Well, with such liberty, and the possibility of playing an important part, confronting her, it is infinitely preferable that a woman should marry late rather than soon, and begin her housekeeping when her mind is fully matured. This will permit her to continue some of her high studies without in the least losing sight of the inevitable 'he'; and if I hesitate to affirm, like Cardinal Bembo, that Latin puts the finishing touch to her charms, I cannot at the same time bring myself to believe that thought, which gives so fair and noble a radiance to some men's features, will dull the countenance of a girl.

For higher study, history, even of the scientific order, would in such a case be not unbecoming, if only to hold the imagination in due restraint. This struck Fénelon at an epoch when the stage gave us *Le Cid*, and when the novels were those of Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Likewise the study of psychology and ethics might be profitably pursued; for, after all, until we revert to barbarism, moral reflection is bound to remain of some account.

But here it is otherwise with women than with

men. These serious questions are for women a luxury, and it is the matters seemingly ornamental that are serious for them. In a word, they will do well to develop above all their æsthetic education in every possible way; for instance, to own a small library composed of those choice and beautiful books of which to read one passage is sufficient to sweeten the day—the New Testament, the *Imitation of Christ*, Racine, Lamartine, Corneille, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, some portions of the *Paroles d'un Croyant* of Lamennais, &c.

And is not this also the moment to develop the art of talking? This recommendation will raise a smile; the idea of teaching girls to chatter! Well, that was what was done at Saint-Cyr, where Madame de Maintenon herself used to superintend the conversation lesson. Ladies in olden days were recommended to study the art of talk in all its varieties, even for speaking to their servants. This discipline was looked upon, first of all, as an apprenticeship to good breeding, and secondly as a precaution against dulness and insipidity, which was regarded as a veritable vice. Finally, odd as it may appear, it was thought that learning to speak was also learning to be silent. You wish to avoid tittle-tattle? then talk; if you can talk, you will be able on occasion to spend a whole day in solitude and silence.

This apprenticeship to conversation involves other arts, of which, indeed, it is the synthesis and crown. Conversation alone accustoms a woman to discern the real value of men, to know how to deal with them, how to exercise a serious influence upon them: conversation brings out something more than conventional opinion, and exposes mere surface convictions donned for the occasion. Nay more, it has a singularly beneficial effect on the person who speaks, for there is no means so successful for self-persuasion as the attempt to persuade other people.

Lastly, is it our business to develop and guide a young girl's capacity for love? Surely it is. Why should not sensibility spread out its broad wings? Ah! we should hear much less of various ailments and exhausted vitalities did we remember the admirable saying of Balzac: "To these creatures of fire, living is feeling. When once feeling ceases, they are dead." Yes, I would with discretion advocate the claims of passion before them—which does not mean novels or flightiness. This is the time, if we choose to make it so, for high and beautiful passions.

When a girl has a mother, and is accustomed to feel with her; when the mother is not afraid to share the joys, hopes, and sorrows of her daughter, from the day when her doll is broken;

the conditions exist for the birth and the development of an admirable sympathy, which is one of the finest passions in the world.

A passion of this kind very quickly discovers itself in the daughter by an engaging simplicity and openness and courtesy, a quiet cheerfulness, and an infectious gaiety; and the mother, reading this limpid heart, learns also to read her own heart, and to discover hidden springs of feeling there.

Accomplishments, games, open-air exercises are in their right place during this period of life, which ought to be above all a period of light-hearted merriment.

Physicians like Dr. de Fleury wish us to return to the beautiful rhythmic dances in the open air so high in favour in days of antiquity and during the Renaissance, and which are still vaguely reflected in certain round dances among the Bretons. I am not very sanguine as to the fulfilment of this pious aspiration.

You know the dances I mean, depicted on so many bas-reliefs and pictures and tapestries, sung by poets, celebrated in a hundred ways. To render the sinews pliant and elastic seems their whole intention. Girls and youths clasp hands in unruffled modesty, with never a sign of physical or moral excitement. On a green lawn under a warm sky, amidst the odours of pines and rose-trees,

fanned by the soft breath of Nature, the dancers, swinging garlands of flowers and singing the while, move their whole bodies in a rhythm of incomparable charm. From time to time the orchestra breaks in upon their song with a light and tripping strain.[1] In this graceful exercise they sought and found the perfect flower of human beauty, unfolding as roses bloom. True, their performance was merely sensuous, of all modes of human converse the least; but it was dancing raised to the highest pitch of perfection, dancing to which it were impossible to impart more charm or grace. That, assuredly, might still deserve to be called an art, a name which I am not sure is merited by the noisy frolicking and hustling seen in certain stuffy drawing-rooms to-day.

[1] Memoir of Philarete, chap. xvi., towards the end.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

MARRIED LIFE

"By sin man lost happiness, but not the means of recovering it.

"God will wipe away all the tears of His saints."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

THE second maternity, at once the more important and the more difficult, is this: A woman must be the mother of her husband, and afterwards of her sons.

Some one will protest: "How very far we are from that condition! What a paradox!" By no means. So far as the sons are concerned, nothing could be clearer: in the animal kingdom the mother's love is of higher quality than the father's; and among human kind, motherhood is the palpable and indisputable family bond. But even in regard to the husband,—if we will but pause for a moment to consider this great question of marriage, always a fruitful subject of discussion, and in so doing banish selfish considerations, ignore base passions, and shut our ears to the flood of special pleadings,—no one will deny, I think, that a man's existence is only completed when a woman links herself to him

with the seriousness, the readiness to meet whatever the future may bring, and the moral sincerity, which marriage implies.

You argue: "How can a woman honour marriage to this extent? The marriage state is based on a physical and universal fact, which has no great nobility in itself, and which, truth to tell, demands neither intelligence nor sensibility. Even the bird of prey has a nest, the tiger loves. The sparrows know nothing of functionaries or members of Parliament, but the most insignificant of the sparrows espouses a mate, at any rate provisionally. We women do likewise, with the addition of the rational and becoming idea of an association of interests. Marriage stands for the sum and crown of the material life: thank God, it includes no slight admixture of the higher materialities—of reason, and calculation, and personal interest. We don't merely marry a *man:* if my husband, such as he is (I love him!), had neither his income nor his intelligence, nor a thousand other things that I associate with him, I should never have said 'Yes.' In a marriage seriously entered into, one attaches much more importance to moral qualities, intelligence, character, than to love. Such a marriage is a piece of solid masonry, with foundations deep on the bedrock of the useful, the true, the moral; and really it would be

hardly judicious, and not very tempting perhaps, to start with a wholly physical fascination. Besides, women are not so sensual, nor even so sentimental, as some people are pleased to imagine; they are actuated for the most part by calculations of personal interest or vanity, and the woman who was neither vain nor solicitous about herself would never love anybody. And as for men, they don't marry like schoolboys. If a woman esteems her husband, it is because he has not merely wedded a pretty woman, a rare toy, a five-minutes plaything: the five minutes are to last a lifetime—and so is the wife."

Unquestionably, a man's whole existence is coloured by his home life: it is here that the law of the environment shows itself more especially in operation. The wife is often the cashier, the ruling spirit of the household, and from this arises the French genius for economy.

So marriage tends more and more to become a contract. We have given up the delightful old custom of formal betrothals, which endued realities with so marvellous a fragrance. We prefer, as soon as a match is made, to run for the parson and clerk; every one is in a terrible hurry to 'get it over,' for the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And then !——

And so folks marry as reasonable beings, and

do well ; but carried to extremes the system results in people not marrying at all, or, at any rate, not if they can help it.

For if marriage is a mere matter of utility, neither more nor less, a poor man will obviously suffer himself to be tempted when he sees a chance of fetching his price ; while it is equally obvious that a rich man is in no hurry. Marriage and paternity are expensive ; it was not yesterday the Epicureans discovered that love brings trouble into a man's life, and that the wise man does well to eschew it.

To follow another line of thought, there are some men, elect spirits, who live on ideas, intellectual work, ideals ; and these, not being open to considerations of personal interest, shrink from the marriage bond as too material. Mystics have handed down through the ages the praise of virginity and celibacy—one eternal paraphrase of the famous axiom of St. Paul : "Both he that giveth his own virgin in marriage doeth well ; and he that giveth her not in marriage shall do better."

"I laud wedlock," said St. Jerome, "because it engenders virgins : I draw a pearl out of an oyster."

"Nothing debases a man," said St. Augustine, "like the caresses of a woman."

"'Tis vices that people the earth, and virginity that peoples heaven," wrote St. Thomas of Aquinas

In our own time, Lacordaire, for all his eminently ardent and sympathetic heart, took on himself the defence of men who think marriage beneath them. "Scarcely is he become a man, nay, even before," he writes, "the son of the most loving mother yearns to separate from her. . . . He will at any rate find that liberty of choice which is one of the conditions of love? Far from it. A thousand imperious circumstances mark out for a man the companion of his life, and he advances to the altar, a victim crowned with cankered roses, to promise everything, and to give very little. . . . Conjugal love, the strongest of all loves while it lasts, is vitiated by a flaw arising from its very ardour: the senses are not alien thereto."

Lacordaire went even further. He wrote: "There are mothers who love their sons, and husbands who love their wives; these are bonds of imperfection, but they exist."

And yet he was a sentimentalist: his visions were filled with a life into which sentiment largely entered; but to him, marriage did not rise above self-interest and prudential considerations, — the conception we have of it to-day.

Though this eulogy of virginity finds little response in current opinion and ideals, yet many women will understand it. It is not always physical subjection that tempts them; on this matter

St. Augustine said grimly that wives are the bond-servants of their husbands, and the same attitude explains the fact that for ages widows with a turn for remarriage have been mercilessly assailed with epigrams and lampoons.

If marriage is to attain the supreme heights of its possibilities, a deep and earnest affection must be developed. "A hand greater than man's is ever at work in the family," as M. Charles Wagner admirably says. Happy are the wives who accomplish their life in a song of rejoicing and praise! But how many there are, of the purest and most refined, who bear with them throughout their life a nameless disquietude of soul! This arises from a too close familiarity with materialities. The husband is quite unconscious of it. On the contrary, he thinks himself worthy of all praise. What more is wanted of him?

What is wanted, replies the eminent American preacher, Father Hecker, is the union of souls, conjoined for an end worthy of them. Union of bodies? — no: union of interests? — no! This would mean to clip one's wings too sadly, to narrow one's horizon. The family ought not to be regarded as merely a material bond: marriage is the art of loving in common the same beings, the same things, the same places, of cherishing

common memories, of suffering together, hoping together, praying together. Self-interest is a very coarse and very brittle cement, likely to crumble away and ruin the edifice. Love alone holds all things together.

But the mystics say that we shall only love with a real and tranquil love in Paradise, where fleshly ties will have vanished, where there will be no more birth, no more death—where women will be angels, and Love will be released from the bonds of Time.[1]

St. Augustine meets this point with a theory which we beg leave to state in a few words, for these old Fathers of the Church are not known so well as they ought to be: none of our novelists is richer in suggestion.

We have, he says, our conception of happiness and our thirst for happiness because we vaguely remember a lost paradise, which our instincts prompt us all to regain.

The first paradise gave harbourage to a man and a woman, beautiful in body, pure in heart, never reasoning, but loving each other, and having nothing to fill their minds but beauty and love.

On the day when this man and woman were married (if we may use the term), when they con-

[1] St. Augustine: cf. St. Luke xx. 34, 35; St. Matthew xxii. 32; St. Mark xii. 27.

tracted themselves together according to the flesh, nothing was left to them but to die—their happiness was at end—and to give birth to other beings. Birth was the ransom from death. You recognise here the verse in the *Miserere:* "In sin did my mother conceive me." We were born, and we remain, perishable beings, flung into the midst of struggle, toil, pain, disease.

And thus, sorrows, toils, struggles are transitory things; and our souls, stamped with the seal of Paradise, tend always to return towards the state of primal happiness: towards ideal love, virginity, and beauty. The body has its share in this joy; the body also is beautiful, and needs must be glorified, provided it remains in subjection to the soul. It is not to be wholly neglected, and we need suffer no pang of conscience if we utilise it normally, so long as we look to a noble aim. Nor is there any reason to cramp the soul, to compress it, so to speak, in a vice, and to fancy ourselves to be more holy because we sow our own life with thorns,—and sometimes the lives of others also, for we are almost always answerable for some one's happiness.

Struggle and trial, then, are to be endured as the crosses of life, not as its substance. What seems to us at the present time to be the one thing needful will pass away. We were born, in reality,

for beauty and for love; and these will not pass away. Everything that raises us to them is a foretaste of Paradise, and shall endure. This is the divine reality. Thus the hand can, nay, must, stretch forth towards beauty; the eyes can feast on it, the lips love it: Beauty may be proud of herself, provided always that the soul holds sway. The body is the portal of Love, and the soul its sanctuary. Hence it is that marriage leads us to a higher life. It is for us to enter into love. The rarest natures make direct and easy entrance, without the aid of any carnal bond; but the majority of us pursue the well-worn track, the flesh our starting-point, the spirit our distant goal.

For it is the characteristic of love to abandon self, to forget itself in the loved one. "If you enter not into your beloved, your love is still but external; you have nothing of love's penetrating power; you languish, remaining in the outer courts; you are sundered from him you love, and are not one, heart and soul, with him";[1] a statement in which we catch tones of the Fathers of the Church.

In this matter, then, art consists in gathering from marriage all possible benefit; and the first point is to beware of abusing it.[2] There are good

[1] Richard, quoted by St. Bonaventure, *The Seven Roads to Eternity*.

[2] "If you believe it possible to be happy with your wife," wrote Madame de Maintenon to her brother, "take care to keep yourself in hand and not get tired of her; take care not to disgust her with

marriages, excellent marriages, but none ideal. And so it is a great pity to take life too seriously, as many good women do: a certain lightness of hand is needed, a touch of coquetry, the power to awaken desire, to make herself the object of thought,—not to make herself cheap. In this direction, serious occupations render immense service; very silly and very short-sighted are those young wives who pout at their husband's ambitions, sulk at having to live where his work is, and have a horror of hours of solitude; who act as a drag instead of a stimulus, and reduce him to a life of hunting, smoking, racing, vacuity. If in so doing they fancy they are strengthening their hold, they make a terrible mistake; they succeed only in annihilating or wearing out the man.

Woman holds the key of life. If she is a good housekeeper, and imparts to husband and sons her love for beautiful things, for enthusiasm and devotion and fame, she will be only the better loved. Let her be careful of her person and her time; the more one does, the more one has leisure to do.

These ideas will not, I know, have the honour of approving themselves to all ladies. With some

indelicacies which are bound to make an impression, and prevent her also from showing any such before you. . . . You have two rooms excellently suited for that, at Cognac. Let people say what they will: the man who cannot find happiness is a simpleton; and you must take the easiest road."

of them, flightiness of conduct serves to cloak emptiness of mind or an indolence from which they think it impossible to escape. Or some, perhaps, idolising their husband, magnify his good qualities to themselves—not a very serious blunder, that; or else they give him the cold shoulder, and then forsooth are heard complaining that their husband "has not formed them." But why have they not formed themselves? This, they fancy, would involve deep study, earnest inquiry, thought; believe me, nothing of the kind; it is enough to embody love and devotion in their own homes, to diffuse around them cheerfulness and joy and graciousness, to be what the Son of Sirach calls "the light of the house";[1] and no woman alive but has intelligence enough for that.

Sometimes people are amazed at the almost religious veneration that some men show for their wives. Such men are the sons of their mothers; it is clear that a certain well-remembered graciousness and loving-kindness has never been displaced in their hearts. For the opinion we have of women depends absolutely on our own individual recollections of them. If we have despised them, held them cheap, we judge them contemptible beings.

[1] ["As the sun ariseth in the highest places of the Lord, so is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of a man's house. As the lamp that shineth upon the holy candlestick, so is the beauty of the face in ripe age."—*Ecclesiasticus* xxvi. 6.]

But if we have known great women; if, above all, we have been reared beneath their shadow or have lived in intimacy with them, we have a high ideal of womanhood, as an indispensable influence in the world. Christ, in the midst of the company at Cana, said to His mother: "What are this water and this wine to us? *Quid mihi et tibi?*"—a beautiful utterance, the seal of two souls welded into one: *quid mihi et tibi?*—"to us two!"[1]

Nor will any eloquence match the first words of Lamartine, in the speech he made on being received into the Academy: "My happiness! At that time I was happy! . . . All my joys—my intellectual joys, my joy in family and fatherland—were doubled! They were reflected in another heart. That time is gone. None of the days in a long life can restore to a man what is reft from him by that fatal day when he reads in the eyes of his friends what no lips dare to utter: 'You have lost your mother!'"

And yet no one should count on life. While consecrating herself wholly to the happiness of her dear ones, a woman would be wrong to make their life the pedestal of her own happiness. For husband, sons, daughters, unnumbered ills lie greedily in

[1] [The author quotes from the Vulgate version of St. John ii. 4, and his translation differs widely from ours, removing indeed from the sentence that accent of rebuke which has been so variously accounted for by our commentators.]

wait. They may succumb to them, or be grievously hurt by them; they may part from you, or live far away. What, O woman's heart, would befall thee if thou hadst set upon them all thy joy! One of old said these words, awful in their profundity: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." It was told the Christ, "Behold, Thy mother and brethren are without, desiring to speak with Thee." And He answered, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples and said: Behold my mother and my brethren." In other words, He tells us to sip the cream of this present life, not to drain it to the dregs. Some few women, possibly, believe too much in marriage; others, mayhap, do not believe in it enough; life must not be lived entirely indoors or entirely out. Our hearts are woven of a tissue noble enough for all great ideas and honourable affections to find a place therein.

In a word, then, true marriage is an association of like tastes and unlike characters. Your body, Madam, is your husband's: his soul belongs perforce to you.

I am reminded of the faggots made by the countryfolk in our woods; they systematically add charm to the oaken twigs by slipping in here and there among them sprigs of thorn.

The bundle is pleasing to the eye, and makes a good fire.

But if you aimed at uniting discrepant things—a jaded man with a girl of fresh young soul, a toil-worn man with a woman faded by indolence,—you would need a link of iron.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE NECESSARY AFFECTIONS

> "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up."—ECCLESIASTES iv. 10.

I. *The Family.*

YET other relationships are necessarily born of the mechanical and physical part of life; art consists here in winning from them what may be called the necessary affections, since they result from a material fact—from an act of reason, not an act of free will. Freedom to choose and passion both have no part in them: at the same time, this class of affections has for its support at any rate natural similarities of tastes, a presumptive love for the same things.

Such is what we call family feeling, a somewhat rare thing to-day: it presupposes a number of persons brought up together, or trained in the same ideas, with common interests or a common tradition. A united family may be compared to the crew of a ship.

The family affections present on analysis the

same mixed elements as marriage. You find at the outset a rational attachment, altogether different from, indeed opposed to, love properly so called—the law justly forbids marriage with a half-sister. On this rational attachment, again, is superimposed a certain solidarity of material interests, which in some cases may extend beyond blood relations and embrace a body of clients similar to the ancient *gens*.

In the pagan days of serfdom, slaves formed part of the *familia* : their ashes were mingled with the remains of their masters in the family *columbarium*. In the Middle Ages, again, the 'house' might have been included among the necessary affections; it comprised personages held in high respect, and, indeed, not separated by any wide social gap from the lord, for it was an honour to princesses themselves to begin life with service. This condition of things furthered the reinforcement of the material bond by a moral bond that was often much stronger : to take into one's service persons chosen from a limited and select class, to associate them with one's life, to permit them to marry, to recognise their children and help to educate them, were tasks demanding, along with a patriarchal simplicity, a good deal of time, money, and affection. All this is out of date now. The State is the only master we love to serve, because

we can serve without loving. The labourer and the valet are electors, kings in the land, and consequently more than our equals—our masters; and we take them and leave them, keep them, dismiss them. They work, they steal, they waste their time and ours. The heart is non-existent here: we have shown it the door.

On the other hand, I should be disposed to class among the family affections what may be called the affections of social necessity, such as our relations with neighbours or colleagues: in course of time these become a matter of habit, and deserve the 'family' designation. Similarities in interests and reminiscences, reciprocity of tastes, exchange of ideas, come in course of time to create affections of a very real and choice and stable kind; but even without going so far as that, after long years of intimacy with a country neighbour, you do feel much more closely related to him than to certain relatives by blood. The result is a phenomenon which may be called a "kinship by the soil," which, as well as family affection properly so called, forms an element in the idea of patriotism.

Here too I shall class all the mixed relationships, that is, those that are in part obligatory and in part free, but in which obligation is always predominant: for instance, one's relations with a parson or a doctor, a lawyer or a magistrate. The resulting

affections are of a highly complex and variable nature. In these matters men deal with one another on a certain footing of equality or friendliness ; but women habitually place themselves on a footing of inferiority : they form an almost superstitious idea of the man they assume to be superior and of some use in the world. Some in consequence prefer to have recourse to a nameless and obscure individual, whom they may never meet again, and who will remain a mere speck in their life, with which they have no further concern.

To others, on the contrary, their parson or doctor is the friend of friends, and, in fact, their only one. Any other friendship would perhaps bring a blush to the cheek ; but this one is sanctioned by custom, and provokes no comment.

In such cases the woman, naturally, exercises no influence ; it is she who is influenced ; hence the social influence of doctors is greater than the influence of husbands. Many a husband has so much to attend to, is so terribly busy ! He gets no fee for attending to his wife !

II. *The Fatherland.*

The word 'fatherland' touches the heart of every woman to the quick. But what does the word represent ? To most men it means simply the nation to which they belong, that is, according

to the school-books, a race, a speech, a geographical configuration, a community of interests, or a custom, a tradition.

Certainly, these material elements contribute to the idea of one's fatherland; but they are not sufficient to explain it. If all that were needed was the fulfilment of one of these conditions, would France be a fatherland? No: Alsace never spoke French. Distillers and teetotallers will never have the same interests; and though patriotism is most easily realised in a small country, we have seen in the past, in the Italian republics, how much the patriotic idea formed on economic principles was worth: the most rational of them accepted a foreign despot to rule their state for a year or two, at the point of the sword.

The idea of 'fatherland' is like the idea of 'family'; based on material ties and practical measures for self-preservation, it requires to be cemented by a special, almost an abstract, passion. The fatherland is a communion in love for the same things, or, as St. Augustine said, "the association of a rational multitude, united in the peaceful and common possession of what they love." This is why true statesmen attach so much importance to the intellectual and moral unity of a country. Among us French, in days of old, the fatherland was defined as "one king, one God,

one law." In the sixteenth century, when, under the cloak of religion, the struggle between collectivism and individualism began to rend France asunder, the necessity for strengthening civil unity was felt universally. Catholics, Protestants like Calvin and Jean de la Taille, sceptics like Montaigne, all insisted on unity, even if it had to be secured by force. But since those days we have come to see that force has no permanent results, and that patriotism resides in the unity of love. It consists in loving what we have, and we cannot be harried into happiness by subjection and centralisation. Love of country is nowadays incarnated in love of the flag; it has all the marks of a genuine love; ideals, disinterestedness, devotion, greatest when the political outlook is most gloomy. But it must not be forgotten that love of the flag is only Love applied, and that is why women are so susceptible to it. Castiglione used to say of the Duchess of Urbino: "The Duchess seemed to be a chain binding us all pleasantly together." That is how women understand the fatherland; they love the miniature fatherland of their village because belfry, parsonage, and bridge all forge a pleasant chain about them; and they love their country in the larger sense, not as a system of ethnography or fiscal administration, but because all Frenchwomen are in sympathy with them.

Poor trees of Paris, perpetually on your travels, transported hither and thither—when I see you passing along our quays, going with quivering tops from one place to another, how my heart bleeds for you! Ah, *ye* know nothing of what is meant by a homeland!

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

SOCIAL AFFECTION

> "The great take pride in cutting a way through a forest, in defending their lands with long walls, in gilding their ceilings, in deepening rivers by an inch, in stocking an orange grove; but to make one heart happy, to fill one soul with joy—ah! their curiosity does not go so far as that."—La Bruyère.

Social affection, again, is a necessary affection. Like many animals, men combine to live. The acrimonies produced by this enforced intimacy are known to every one: it is all very well to say that by forming a collection of individual interests you create a general interest, that three idiots are worth more than one, that a vulgar chromograph printed by the million is worth more than the single copy of a great master—the mob is not satisfied. Poor mob! it needs the bread of life—love.

Let us create social beauty. The social art is the art of love. It is a mistake to believe that the masses envy wealth. No; they revolt against the use made of it. Love ideas, and the mob will rise

and follow you to death, even though you are rich. Love your private interests, and hatred will encompass you, even though you are poor.

But here arises the difficulty. I have spoken above of the necessary communism of souls. How is it to be realised ? We men cannot love other men, under pain of crying injustice, madness, disaster.

Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, and many others, have sometimes advocated universal love. As Walt Whitman said, in all seriousness, "We love thus with one love the murderous robber and the pious and good man." The philosophy of Ravachol himself ! The truth is that each of us as we go through the world always has some pet aversion, and the honour of a good man is that he selects his intimates very carefully, shows a preference for good men, scorns rogues however successful, respects the police. The crowd, taken in the mass, often deserves our pity : " I have compassion on the multitude," said Christ ; but God alone can embrace the whole world as one family : we poor mortals, even though our family may not be what men would call numerous, find great difficulty, as it is, in loving all its members. To love too many would be in reality to love no one ; and theories of universal love have hitherto had the ill-luck to breed civil war, a St. Bartholomew massacre, or the horrors of 1793.

St. Augustine settles the question by drawing a very just distinction: "There are two loves; social love and private love." The second is a love from the heart; the first, alas! a love from the head.

How then will women arrive at the communism which is the channel of their affections? By a very simple means: by private love, going to the root of things.

The orator, the preacher, the actor, we perceive, seek to influence the masses by a sort of electric, shall I say robustious excitability; they fancy they have great means at command, and sometimes sadly misuse them. But a woman's art, instinct with delicacy of feeling and spiritual insight, will exercise itself on the elements of social life, not on society itself. As always, it clothes the elementary, the necessary things in a garment of love. That saying of old, "Love one another," is like a strain of exquisite music; it is tantamount to saying, "Brighten life for each other, embellish your existence." Thus, such art as goes to decorating a cottage, enduing it with a little brightness and joy, does more towards solving the social problem than the art of strewing a speech with flowers of rhetoric or of preaching a sermon. Would that our ladies would found an association for supplying every poor man's room with a pot of geranium!

This sort of loving-kindness brings no element of

selfishness into social life: quite the reverse. It binds men together: for to love the elements of life, what is that but to love poverty and wretchedness, all forms of wretchedness, material and moral? Poverty of this vital sort, lives that are from the outset but labour and sorrow, you will find everywhere in plenty. Alas! they need no searching for. Close around us, in very truth, moral indigences are swarming. And what about the outer world, beyond the walls of your garden? Are your walls so high that no cry of anguish strikes upon your ear? Do they stretch up to the heavens, whither such cries ascend? Do you not see the multitudes dying, the hearts' blood flowing which nothing on earth can stanch? The supreme joy of Christ was to be "with the children of men," not because they flocked to hear Him discourse, but because, placed, like you, above them, yet near to them, He read their hearts like an open book; and with five loaves and two fishes He fed them all: "Lo, they continue with Me now three days!" Do you not perceive, dear ladies, for how long, for how many ages, the people have continued with you? You wear jewels, 'tis true, and dress beautifully for your part as actresses on the stage of life; but where are the noble sayings that have fallen from *your* lips—golden words, pearls of salvation? To maintain your rank, encourage trade, and pay

your dress bills are most excellent things; but is that all you do towards setting an example? Will that bring about a strengthening of the ties between man and man, or sift out the best and worthiest from among them? I know well that the masses have defects, and often make but a tardy and grudging response to the love shown them. They have, in particular, such a mania for equality that a monument reared on the soil is to them reprehensible, and the nose of a statue is sinfully prominent, a lesson learnt only too well at every revolution. At the same time they think, with charming good faith, that no intellect can possibly be superior to theirs, and that all the benefits of civilisation were the joint discovery of everybody. To be something in France is open to any nobody.

But, if this is any comfort to you, Madam, remember that every new revolution gives birth, and will always give birth, to a new aristocracy; for, after all, fig-trees will always bring forth figs, asses will always bray. The chief defect of a ruling democracy is just the fact that, to escape relapsing into barbarism or slavery, it necessitates the creation of a new aristocracy.

Well, all you have to do is to bring about a revolution in men's hearts, and you yourselves will become this social aristocracy; you represent

the refinements and the superiorities; therefore of you alone have we need.

To our jealousies will be opposed your loving-kindness — which is love's currency, if not love itself. Every one of you can at least act upon husband, children, friends, acquaintances; and the higher you are in the social scale, the wider does this duty of loving your neighbour extend. The great ladies of the Renaissance boldly accepted what they regarded as a public duty for those in their lofty station—the love of humanity. There are still Frenchwomen, Englishwomen, American women who carry on this tradition, though, to tell the truth, they get small thanks for it.

You will tell me that they are wasting their time, and might employ their affections very much better. "For my part, I love the poor, of course, and am ready to go round collecting (till I become a nuisance, indeed), to patronise charitable schemes, to devote myself heart and soul to opening the purses of others, and even (since a social work is in question) to accept the newspapers' statement that French society lives for charity, which is true. But do you really believe that the poor would not rather have a little hard cash than what you call the currency of love? To begin with, one can love the poor in general, but I altogether defy you to love certain individual poor people—that is, to live

in affectionate contact with them. They are so aloof, so different, from us, sometimes so degraded. And then, out of the immense mass of them, you see so few! And among those you do see, how many will you love? And of those you love, how many will accept the gift of your love? And then, what good will it be? I shall go in for charity, then, because it is a moral and religious act; but really, I don't see how, in the social sense of the word, it can possibly constitute an aristocracy."

I will tell you how.

The distribution of alms is certainly indispensable, and, far from objecting to its proper organisation and administration, we cannot praise too highly the admirable organisations of this kind—such bodies, for instance, as the Charity Organisation Society.

Money carries its value along with it; all that is needed is wisely to distribute it; but whence it comes is a matter of little moment. Yet money is, as the jurists say, a *fungible* thing; in other words, its effect is restricted: by feeding one pauper you do not feed two. Love, on the contrary, is by its very essence contagious.

You tell me that you cannot see how a woman widens or elevates her character by going and chatting with two or three, or let us say ten or twenty, poor people—at any rate, how she gains more than with ten or twenty of her own friends.

Love is like the little leaven that by and by leaveneth the whole lump. If one poor creature loves you, ten will love you; and if you win love for an idea, the effect is greater still. Love is a spiritual dynamite. How much explosive is required for uprooting a mountain? Ricardo was right when he defined it as "the secret force at the root of social evolution."

Especially true is this with us French. Every time it has been attempted to make us a rational country, the sole result has been to make us a people bored. Without passion we accomplish nothing, we understand nothing: that is our weakness and our strength. We venerate the moneyed world, then in a sudden frenzy we avoid it, as though it were the plague.

Mammon appears to be throwing a vast upas shade upon our springs of life; but for it we should see the rise, it seems, of thousands of Raphaels and Napoleons. Of course: societies, like individuals, have their natural constitutions—their youth and age, their health and diseases. They exalt one man, and slay another—capriciously, to all appearance: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill."

Aye, and it is precisely that fact which should elevate the rôle of women. I know well that to sow the seed of love, and devotion, and the ideal, is not

all ease and pleasantness. To begin with, there is a positive physical and moral weariness in loving thankless souls. Again, in the strife between interest and affection, the heart does not always come off victorious. But alas! the thankless are not found only among the poor. And have ye not, poor, betrayed, unhappy women—have ye not sometimes had to fling yourself at the feet of Him who for us became poor, crying, "If Thou hadst been here, *he* would not have died!"

Women, then, must not shrink from carrying everywhere the love of the beautiful, or from embodying in themselves the spirit of beauty. From the social point of view, that duty may be fulfilled in numberless ways. For instance, the custom prevalent among Frenchwomen of making up, with no small skill, little artistic creations is a practice that has, æsthetically, an influence of the highest order. One may fairly say that it has given a great stimulus to the industries of taste which are the special mark of Paris, and constantly sustains them.

Need I say more? If you live in the country, what countless opportunities you have!—not confined to giving your rector an occasional invitation to dinner, though that is not a bad beginning. But might you not take an interest in the neatness and cleanliness of the houses, and even exert some

influence on the training of girls in this direction? Unhappily, in our land of so-called universal suffrage, the law still refuses to admit women to school-boards and charitable committees, despite the example of England and America. Still, by practical example and wise counsel, a lady can, indirectly, do much good.

Our jealous law, too, though it recognises no differences between man and man, refuses to women, however nobly gifted, and however closely interested in good government, any opportunity of influence on governing boards. A town council, so far as they are concerned, is *res sacra*. Happily, men are ruled by men, and our deep respect for the proceedings of our municipal authorities does not blind us to the fact that, even in the most august assemblies, the unwieldy organism of two hundred persons often reduces itself to a handful, capable of admirable work if they feel their responsibility, but who, if irresponsible and impelled by passion, are sometimes swept off their feet—because a captain is bound to follow his troops. As for the mass of the electors, I shall not venture to say, with Schopenhauer, Nordau, and other pessimists, that all they trouble about is "to gorge and glut themselves, propagate, and make their exit." No. But by example, by playing upon their snobbish instincts, and many elementary means, we still act upon them.

If women, then, could induce political orators, instead of making grand speeches, simply to repeat the saying of St. Francis of Assisi : "The Lord give you peace!" they would have a good chance to elevate the masses in some degree; and then, instead of building prisons, we should erect cathedrals, for it is only the spirit of jealousy that prevents us.

Meanwhile, form friendships among the people—genuine friendships. This will truly elevate you, for the true life is not the life of rush and excitement, but the inward life, broadened and heightened by sociability. And if these humble friends of yours are beneath you, and have need of you—how blest are ye! It was this that evoked Christ's smile, and the angelic strains that proclaimed around His lowly cradle : "Peace on earth, good will toward men!" Yes, you will curtain life's woes with loving-kindness and serenity; your beauty, your smiles, your affection will be as dew upon parched ground. And especially is it your bounden duty to dispense the largesse of conversation. A woman has no right to refrain from making herself loved; and in truth, from this standpoint, the social problem is a question of the education of women.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

RELATIONSHIPS

> "A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found him hath found a treasure."—ECCLESIASTICUS, vi.

RELATIONSHIPS properly so called proceed from interest and necessity. We desire to have acquaintances, we find them necessary, so as to 'see a little company,' to have people at our parties and our funerals, to feed our vanity, to amuse ourselves, to get into a set. Nay more, we form as large a circle of acquaintances as possible (this is almost an axiom with modern society); with the result that all trace of art in this matter entirely disappears, for you can hardly call it 'art' to leave your card on a thousand people to whom you are, to say the least, profoundly indifferent. Your acquaintanceship only approximates to art when it is a nursery of friendships,—in so far as it produces a bud of sympathy which will by and by blossom into a select and precious affection for persons bound to you by no material tie, either of blood, interest, or obligation. Thus regarded,

multiplicity can only be injurious. But it presents this advantage, to which we must allow full weight—that it helps to idealise men, by giving us a kind of abstract knowledge of them, almost solely through their actions and their ideas — a very different thing from knowing the men themselves, inasmuch as, from one cause or another, the lives of very few men exactly correspond with their ideas.

It will, however, always be necessary to come into more or less intimate relationship with one's fellow-men. What is the principle of selection to be? On what men can one hope to exercise an influence? Obviously on those who are capable of loving the same things as we ourselves do. All others are and will remain mere acquaintances. The point is, then, to learn how to divine men; it is easier to divine them than to know them. For those who possess any strength of character often tend to be reserved; they are like nuts whose kernel is sound enough, but concealed under two or three husks; cracking is more effectual than paring. As for those who are all on the surface, they are the tribe you know least of all: gesture is nothing, or at any rate is not to be estimated according to its intensity; a person who kisses your hand is doing more than a dog that licks it: the sober, measured gesture of an experienced man has

deeper meaning than the antic gesticulations of a child.

We meet in the world, moreover, many people of importance who so carefully conceal themselves behind their possessions that we are in great straits to estimate the men themselves. A name, a fortune, an office, are masks almost impenetrable. There is nothing for it but to strip them off. . . . It is certainly a fine thing to be 'your father's son'; in democratic societies especially, it gives one an enviable start in this present life to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth, or to inherit a great name. But such title-deeds carry vast obligations with them, and to-day, as at all times, the flower of a nation, its effective aristocracy, will really consist of men of strong and well-developed individuality, from whom a multitudinous posterity will spring. This does not imply that a man must necessarily work with his hands or serve behind a counter. But individuality will always retain its importance.

To read a man's character in his face, we may rely on his mouth and eyes. Though less mobile than those features in women, they will rarely fail to furnish useful information. Joy displays itself on the lips, making them, so to speak, glow; desire causes them to protrude, like a ripe and ruddy fruit; disdain, essentially a lower emotion, curls

the upper lip and causes the lower to project; anxiety draws down the lower lip, with a marked tightening at the corners; while a tinge of scepticism, or rather a feeling that life has nothing more to give, raises the lower lip and makes it fold over the upper.

In regard to the eyes, very few men are clever enough to veil them so that women cannot read them.

The habit of carefully analysing in this way the people who come before our notice will enable us to place them definitively in two categories: the weak and the strong.

The weak form the immense majority; but these also fall into two classes: those who are downright incumbrances, mischievous and incurable; and those whose very weakness admits of being turned to account.

How many of the former class we know!

The nincompoop, for instance: the fellow with stereotyped smile, irrepressibly amiable, but addlepated. He is incurable.

Then the 'society' pet: the man with intelligent but stony eye, impertinent at half a chance, dangling about fashionable ladies because 'tis 'smart,' a friend only to the depth of his hide. Frankly, Madam, why do you make yourself a living sacrifice to these fellows?

Look at this other candidate for your friendship; sincerity is the last rag of virtue left to him, and so he doesn't pose as a lily of the valley. He wants to grovel before an idol or to tear it down—a good fellow, kind, and even honourable; and what is more, a cheerful soul. But as to believing that a woman can exercise any useful influence—not he! the brain has had nothing to do with *his* knowledge of women. Such as he is, women have liked him, and will like him still, for many women are content with his type, matter of fact, transparent, uncomplicated. He never loses himself in a maze of niceties of propriety and respect. He is a man of the period, and has no need of you.

Lastly, there is the vast miscellaneous crowd of snobs, fortune-hunters, lick-spittles, thin minds beaten to the thinnest, vain shadows, boobies who *must* be flattered, and as grossly as you please.

Since nothing is impossible, there are even men who respect you. If I may be allowed to have an opinion, I would hazard the timid suggestion that these are the men whom women ought to prefer. Lay down as your first principle that you love those who love you, and you will have a host of friends; as your second principle that you love those who esteem you, and the essential choice will immediately be effected. And this

is really an easy matter. You are all true aristocrats, dilettanti of life: you like to be served, but with a free, willing service. You want men to be men, not slaves, and to take you into their lives at the behest, not of folly, but of taste. You laugh at them, and profess to think their passion a trifle ridiculous; but in reality it delights you. Men, you say, are dreadful creatures; yet you venerate them. You exact their submission, expect them to be weak where you are concerned, on the charming condition that you feel all the time their weakness to be feigned; for if it is genuine, let us hold our peace. The true man in your eyes is the virile being, the man who, while capable of the highest raptures, compels your respect; the man to whom you will cling to-morrow, and who does not fail to let you know it. You feel that his hold on you and respect for you result from his rendering you what is your due—neither more nor less. As a rule, too, your noble desire to help men and to exert more or less influence on them, is not without a measure of vanity. But even here you must keep within bounds; some women make a mistake in surrounding themselves with men who are making a noise in the world. Alas! glory itself is a street with broad gutters; some great men are only lucky humbugs; others gain by exhibiting them-

selves in the glare of the footlights, which suits their bonelessness. They fascinate and dazzle, it is true, but they will never love any one but themselves.

The more sincere, the greater a man is, the less is he complex. His very features wear an expression of confidence, active, frank, wholesome, attractive. The life of St. Vincent de Paul is a romance; but what wonderful unity it possesses! If you relish a man's honesty, his freedom of mind; if, even, it gives you pleasure to find in his soul a somewhat bitter savour, harsh but tonic, you are worthy of him! Falsehood and trickery are virtues of the servants' hall, the brand of our neurasthenias; then help this vigorous being to live a full life. If he is a scholar, whom much learning is making mad, you will cause the invigorating air of life to penetrate even the covers of his books. If his eyes are shut to beauty of form, from you he will quickly learn to open them. Whether he be sanguine or melancholy, quick-witted or stolid, you will show, in spite of Aristotle, that these high and subtle distinctions blend as in a crucible in the pretty hands of a mistress. You will make him a considerate and peace-loving creature, a thinking and religious soul: you will enter the prison-house of his spirit, and throw wide its windows. You cannot

make the sun, to be sure, but you can let in its light and heat. As for the legion of beings who drift aimlessly along, tossed hither and thither like rudderless ships—these are casual acquaintances whom you may try, out of pure goodness and loving-kindness, to help and benefit, just as you would gently tend anæmic plants dying for want of water and air. Only you must take care not to let them believe that wretchedness is their native element, for they are only too ready to persuade themselves that a jail-bird and wastrel, a disreputable drone like Verlaine, is worthy of a statue. A pretty art, forsooth, to be incapable of enduring a recollection or an odour without swooning or getting drunk!

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

CONVERSATION

"Etre femme sans jalousie,
Et belle sans coquetterie,
Bien juger sans beaucoup savoir,
Et bien parler sans le vouloir,
N'être haute ni familière,
N'avoir point d'inégalité;
C'est le portrait de La Vallière."—
Mme de la Vallière, by VOLTAIRE.

"L'esprit, l'imagination,
Les grâces, la philosophie,
L'amour du vrai, le goût du bon,
Avec un peu de fantaisie."—*Mme de Saint-Julien* by VOLTAIRE.[1]

IN former times the æsthetic cultivation of life led up to an art, its crown and consummation, which seemed as natural among women as, let us say, among the bees: the art of holding a salon and queening it there. Even a dairymaid, I believe, could then have gathered men about her, and set them bringing honey to the hive. A

[1] ["Womanly without being jealous, beautiful without being a coquet, of sound judgment though little knowledge, an excellent talker without conscious effort, neither uppish nor familiar, evenly balanced—such is the portrait of Madame de la Vallière."

"Wit, imagination, charms, philosophy, love of the true, taste for the good, with a spice of capriciousness."]

good talker was looked upon as the supreme artist, so much the more because people were somewhat prone to despise the printed word, regarding it rather as a public commodity, debased by being brought within reach of the vulgar, like an article of agricultural or intellectual produce.

It is not a little difficult for us in these days to realise the social importance of conversation to our ancestors. "The thoughts of men have to be loved to be understood."[1] "A man believes, not merely with his intellect, but also with his sentiments and impulses, native or acquired."[2] That is the artistic principle which used to hold. They relied on conversation to invest the loftiest scientific speculations with special attractiveness, and to indue them with an almost physical vitality.

Sociability, the bonds of human affection, were thus closely connected with something immeasurably higher—the Idea. And, in truth, what would pure Idea be unless there were some one to bring it out of the laboratory, so to speak, and become its propagator, apostle, and artist ?

And it was in this function that conversation excelled. It was in many ways a disseminator of life, because it was in some sort (if I may be forgiven the barbarism) the *sympathisation* of life. In France, writes Madame de Staël, "it kindles men's

[1] Guyon. [2] M. Fouillée.

wits as elsewhere music or strong drink does." "Conversation," remarks another woman, "is the complement of masculine work—its life, warmth, and soul—that which man really demands of his helpmeet, because he himself has neither the means nor the time to procure it. . . . If both saddled themselves with the same task, who would do the other part of the work? The *other* is in life what the flame is to the lamp. You cannot dissever them without creating darkness."[1]

We know the material of many conversations of the past. Indeed, a famous book, Castiglione's *Courtier*, served for a very long period as a grammar or manual of the art. Castiglione's characters are representative of the cream of society as it was understood in his day,—great lords, artists, or writers, all pure æsthetes, highly instructed, eminently refined, moulded by feminine hands, models of courtesy and grace, though without a touch of priggishness. They handled the drollest and the more serious topics alike with the same gaiety and profundity; their conversation ranged over sport and pastimes, and the most varied occupations, with the greatest freedom.

The women entered with knowledge into all the subjects of discourse—matters of art or affairs of life; they had less originality, perhaps, than their

[1] Madame Neera in the *Journal des Débats*, October 22, 1899.

male friends, less pungency; but, as a rule, they struck a sympathetic note, and in particular exercised a moderating force. They excelled in guiding a conversation, in keeping it within due bounds; even if they scolded a little, men felt how delicately and with what exquisite charm. And observe that, while we still mention with respect the names of the great warriors of the Renaissance—Bayard, La Trémoille, and others—we have not forgotten the names of those eminent women whose sword was their speech; to wit, Margaret, the sister of Francis the First, who was the foremost among women in an age when women were the foremost of mankind.

And yet none of these women ever dreamed of following external careers like our 'feminists'; indeed, they would have regarded many of the customs of our modern society as too masculine. While playing a great part, they deliberately kept within the pale of private life. Their dearest wish was to remain rose-buds of affection, and they almost apologised for having wit; "happily it costs nothing."[1]

To recall these ancient principles is in these days almost to pronounce a funeral oration. Not that we have ceased to talk or to write letters, of course —we talk and write only too much; but we no

[1] Madame de Lambert.

longer say the same things or have the same end in view. We say what we have to say and are done with it, never attempting to give our conversation charm. 'Tis less art and more business to-day; at every street corner yawning letter-boxes (so happily called 'mouths' by the Italians) protrude their lips to suck our life; a club, a public board, an office, do the rest. It is maintained, moreover, that conversation of the old type is no longer possible, and that if it were it would bore us; and we may well believe it, since even in our moments of leisure we prefer being bored in other ways. Conversation no longer has any practical interest, because it consists mainly in repeating what we have just read: the newspapers and reviews supply us constantly with the sayings of those whose profession it is to speak, and many people think that these monologues, which they read in their arm-chairs, and which afterwards serve to light the fire, are excellent substitutes for the trouble we should have to take to speak ourselves, or merely to listen.

This seems to me somewhat unreasonable. Without denying for a moment that the newspapers sparkle with wit, I may be permitted to stick to my belief that there is still room for the spoken word, whose fire, vivacity, and glowing frankness nothing can ever equal. And may I be

allowed to add that the difficulties of conversation are vastly exaggerated? A woman, to guide it well, does not need much eloquence or knowledge: she smites the rock like Moses and lets the spring gush forth. Communication is then established between herself and her guests; she diffuses her friends' thought better than they would do it themselves, and they in their turn diffuse something they have gained from her.

She turns isolated individuals into beings living a collective life; and the consequences are incalculable. One inspiring emotion, however transitory, is enough, if it finds a moment's lodgment in the heart, to colour all our ideas for a long time to come.

Herein lies the true importance of conversation, the something which nothing can replace—to give ourselves freely, and to ask freely of others.[1] Not

[1] "Sometimes, during a long life, a man's only knowledge of God is a vague impression—the impression produced on him by a summer evening, for instance.

"But the instinct for love and the divine is only slumbering. In the presence of beauty, love always awakes.

"It is so natural an aspiration of the human heart to give itself away that, the instant a man presents himself, with no suspicions either of himself or of you, you see hastening from the four winds long processions of souls hungering and thirsting after the Ideal. Reason comprehends a partial gift: affection understands nothing but holocausts.

"What is needed is, first the gift of oneself, and then the large demand from others."—Paul Sabatier, *St. Francis of Assisi.*

to be satisfied with subscribing to a newspaper! Further, this very trouble at which we grumble, and which we are so anxious to avoid—what else is it but the art of making oneself pleasant, the art of politeness, one of the enchantments of civilisation, which is sure to bring with it the exquisite virtues of sociability, forbearance, indulgence?—the art whose aim is to induce fellow-feeling and real sympathy among men?

To receive guests and talk to them is not, then, waste of time for a woman; she is simply fulfilling a duty, and giving us moral nourishment. St. Bernard made this observation long ago when he said that the social virtues, "far from being an obstacle to the spiritual progress of women," help to further it; and it was Madame Necker who declared, a hundred years ago: "They are more virtuous in Switzerland than they are in Paris"—naturally—"but only in Paris do they talk well about virtue."

Many people think that social relations are confined to laughing in company, or at any rate in keeping up the appearance of laughter. They will do anything to maintain a perpetual giggle. It is both good manners and good sense, I admit, to take life cheerily, more especially when it is far from a laughing matter: "Unless we laugh, perchance we shall e'en cry." But to be ever

grinning hardly fosters conversation : laughter is contagious, but not sympathetic. It never expresses tenderness or graciousness of feeling : it is a nervous outcome of surprise, disdain, or incongruity, a sort of primitive whinny, explosive, spasmodic, half convulsive, interrupting the flow of speech. If it is hearty, it shakes the whole frame, contracts the diaphragm ; the head shakes, the eyes stream with involuntary tears, the eyelids are screwed together, the mouth drops half open, two deep furrows stretch from lips to eyes, and the facial nerves work convulsively. There is no music in the sound. Laughter like this should be a very occasional luxury. Somebody once compared the rôle of woman to the action of a packer putting sawdust between bits of crockery : in immoderate laughter it is the other way about ; you hear the crash of breaking china. One should only laugh heartily among intimate friends. Sadness is more intelligible : tears penetrate and enchant the soul : they are the pearls of life ! The greatest favour one can bestow on a friend is to weep before him.

But before strangers we have no business to lay bare our souls : we have only to show good nature and affability. We can be moved without weeping, or laugh a half-laugh which gives fire and brilliance to the eyes without distorting the mouth—differing little from a smile.

The matter of a conversation produces less effect than the manner of it. Without any attempt at acting, the play of lips and eyes and muscles on the speaking face of a woman interprets her thought better than the finest of speeches. What a wonderful thing, this gift of speech ! It is bread that multiplies, the more it is eaten !

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

"A MAN IS JUDGED BY WHAT HE LOVES"[1]

> "I will not say that women, like Molière's Martine, love to be beaten: but they do not much mind a beating, provided you love them."—SAINT MARC GIRARDIN.
>
> "To live after the spirit is to love after the spirit; to live after the flesh is to love after the flesh: for love is life to the soul, as the soul is life to the body."—ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.
>
> "Who loves not against hope knows not love."—SCHILLER.

FINALLY, over and above the affections that are a matter of habit, there is that rare, almost unique condition—perfect intimacy in heart and soul.

The unfading charm of intimate fellowship and mutual confidences epitomises, in fact, the art of life, to such a degree that truly pious minds regard it as a pure effect of divine grace; in other words, as the highest manifestation of divine providence.

"God did me the grace of saving me from myself, not to give me to you, but so that I may *be* you," wrote St. Francis of Sales to Madame de Chantal.

[1] St. Augustine.

Such communion of souls is a sanctuary, a retreat from the crowd, peace of mind, the flower of one's being.

Of what is this intimate affection formed? Like every union, every tie—of an original bent towards the same things, pursued by different paths: it demands two kindred hearts and two disparate minds. Such minds are mutually complementary; they fuse, and in due time attain to perfect unity, which is the fruit of friendship rather than strictly its origin.

Affection, then, may be called the profound union of two beings, different, but never rivals: in other words, two men (or two women) are often bound one to the other in a living friendship, but a complete and indelible affection perhaps only exists between a man and a woman, because their sentiments, keen, but differing in kind, are mutually penetrative, like two saws interlocked.

Look at the philosophy of the book of Genesis. Adam and Eve lived in perfect purity, believing that they were one. They were ashamed when they became conscious of their duality: that is, when they saw that they had separate wills, interests, and desires, divergent or convergent,—for a hermit never blushes. Thus came social relationship into being, to which we are all condemned, since we are sundry. Separateness is therefore a

transgression, from which we can only be redeemed by affection : and affection is a perfect blending of two in one.

This supreme need for pouring out one's soul dominates all hearts. Marriage attains the height of this moral union ; its mission is essentially to satisfy this clamant need. Here and there, moreover, one meets with the enchanting mystery of purely intellectual affections. I am well aware that no one believes in them nowadays : there are epochs which see evil in everything, and others good in everything. It will perhaps, I admit, be ridiculous, rash, almost scandalous to advocate a pure spiritual affection in a society whose greatest joy is to applaud high-kicking or risky jokes. Yet it is true that the higher we rise in the scale of being, the more do the three primitive instincts, defence, attack, and procreation, pale before new conditions of enjoyment and culture. A man in whom the elements are really well mixed troubles very little about women in so far as physical charm is concerned. Without going back to the platonic loves of Dante, Petrarch, and Michelangelo, there were many acknowledged, blazoned intimacies in the nineteenth century, which wronged no one and were merely the truest of friendships. The Muses and Egerias of famous men have sometimes covered them with ridicule ; but certain mystics

have derived from such connections great and supernatural benefits.

Far be it from me, however, to attempt to decide whether we ought to soar to these altitudes, or whether marriage is not the safer road. I am here dealing only with one psychological consideration which every man must apply for himself, namely, with love, which gives us this joy of winning for ourselves an inexhaustible devotion, a perfect affinity; and I say with Lacordaire,[1] that "no true Christian who lives his creed can be without a measure of this love, which flows in our veins as the very blood of Christ." "Christianity gave birth to a new sentiment, which has, so to speak, fused love and friendship in one and the same crucible, giving to love the endurance, the fixity, the serenity in which it was wanting, and rendering friendship more tender, more pleasant, more endearing."[2]

After that, you may argue and split hairs for ever on these distinctions—declare that it is always love with women, to whom friendship is unknown; that the friendship of a man is a thing for important crises, and the love of a woman for every day, and so forth: what is the good of these reasonings, or these pleasantries, or the reproaches founded on

[1] *Life of St. Mary Magdalene.*

[2] M. Daniel Ollivier, lecture at Levallois-Perret, March 1899, published in the *Bulletin de l'Œuvre de N.-D. du Salut.*

the possibility of abuses? Everything is liable to abuse. But true virtue is not, in St. Augustine's words, "the trepidation of weakness fearing to commit sin; it is the tranquillity of love assured of avoiding it."

Marriage is its stronghold sure. But mayhap women would be less religious were priests not men, and we men should be more religious were women to serve the altar. What does that prove save a natural instinct? Every moral affection ennobles the spirit, first æsthetically, because it fixes our attention on the beautiful sides of a man's character, and makes us esteem him above the rest of men; secondly, because every living affection has in itself a higher order of attraction. This sentiment was sketched in a word by Mademoiselle Valentine de Lamartine, in a sentence addressed to her uncle: "Even in a ball-room I find a way to unite myself to you, through Him who binds hearts together."

Sincere affection is, then, a supreme manifestation of art, since it elevates others as well as ourselves, and ennobles our lives. When we rise to this condition, it is not compassion or sympathy that sets our heart throbbing with the joys or sorrows of another: these joys and sorrows are our very own; we instinctively take them upon us and into our lives. We thus gain a sense of

enlargement and progress in ourselves, and we are happy.

And movement in the spiritual life is immediately repeated in the physical life; even a horse's pulse is quickened by a mental excitation, as, for instance, when it is angrily objurgated. Affection will in the end produce a permanent effect, but meanwhile it gives instant shocks of feeling: every emotion in a woman sets a host of little physical organs hurrying to regain their posts, like soldiers when the camp is alarmed, so that all may answer to their names.

More than that, it has a contagious character. In the first place, it mutually transforms the two persons concerned.

"Such is the force of love," said one of the Church Fathers,[1] "that you will inevitably resemble the object of your love, and after having become like him through your common sentiments of affection, you will be in some sort transformed into his very self by the bond of love."[2]

And at the same time love overflows upon your surroundings; observers are struck by it and wish to share it. It is like an epidemic. We delight in the consciousness that all things about us are united in what Cicero called *conspiratio*

[1] Hugues de Saint-Victor.

[2] The title, *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, suggests a psychological truth.

amoris, a permanent complot, a conspiracy of love.

Finally, the soul, in thus partaking of this sacrament of affection, and comforted thereby, soars on so strong a wing as almost to touch eternal things, and we feel that, even beyond the tomb, this love will never die.

O the exquisite art of attaining this oneness, of thus completing each other, and growing!—growing through joy, growing through sorrow; growing even when affection appeals for pardon and its sweetness is mingled with tears! Never will human legislator invent this art. No section of the Code can order us to love through another, to fear for another.

This is art—the art of marriage, the art of life.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

THE DIVINE PLAN

> "These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." —ST. JOHN xv. 17, 18.
>
> "There is for the human soul a divine plan . . . and to realise it, all our cultivation of soul and heart and mind is not superfluous."—DUPANLOUP.
>
> "Dost thou not know, O my soul, that thy Spouse, author of all things, didst give thee this sensibility, this nobility, that thou mightest not live without love? St. Jerome saith to us: 'It is hard for the human soul not to love; it is even necessary that it should be under the dominion of some affection. It must seek its happiness either in high things or in things that are low.'"—ST. BONAVENTURE, *Soliloquy*.

THE divine plan of our life is the maintenance of a full vitality. If the balance is held even between the spending and the renewal of its energies, and the sense of durability is thus added to the sentiment of order, life deserves to be called beautiful and awakens love, so that, born of love, it has its being by love and for love. To what shall I liken it? It is like a lake, which is bound to keep above

the level of its outlet, neither drying up nor overflowing. Or, better, it may be appraised by thermometric scale.

	Degrees.
Death	
Madness, delirium	55
Homicidal mania	50
Frenzy	48
Anger, passionate love	45
Enervation, tears, cries, aimless movements	40
Ill-regulated activity	38
Ambition	35
Boisterous gaiety	30
Courage, ardour, love	25
Frank joy in life	18
Tranquillity	12
Harmony, light, liberty	10
Average condition, fulness, enjoyment	7
Zero	
Gentleness, timidity	5
Melancholy, hypochondria, humility	10
Material appetites, enervating, sexual	15
Coldness of blood, deficient circulation	20
Idleness, fatigue, apathetic resignation	25
Sadness	28
Pain	30
Fear, despair, terror	35
Syncope, coma, loss of consciousness	38
Dissolution	40
Death	

At zero, life, sustained solely by sentiments of the Good and the True, enjoys moderate activity—

a temperature of March or October. Below zero come the depressive emotions, which are insufficient for the normal life. Let me quote the well-known and just saying of Madame de Maintenon: "She is too sensitive to be happy"—too sensitive, in other words, her sensibility is condensed, forced, exaggerated.

These emotional chills are the natural reaction from excessive violence of emotion, and the reaction is all the greater because of the intimate relationship subsisting between the extremes; anger and violent joy are on the borderland of despair, which is depressive; despair, carried to extremes, reverts to the violent outbursts of anger. Even such a strong and tranquillising sentiment as maternal love induces paroxysms of tears or of joy. Further, weakness and indecision are often followed by ungovernable agitation, and from certain 'pleasures' we sink back suddenly into a frigid pessimism—like coffee that has settled on the grounds.

Hence we must make due allowance for the extreme sensibility of man's nature. It is characteristic of happiness to wish to stop at a certain point, leisurely to enjoy the strength acquired and the full consciousness of being alive. "The more we love, the stronger we are,"[1] and the more stable in consequence. "Perfect peace," said St.

[1] Bonghi.

Augustine, "is found where faithfulness in love is found." Happiness comes to us and says: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Sweet words!—that fell from no philosopher's lips—divine words! the plan divine! True it is, then, that, in spite of our baser impulses, in spite of the menaces of pain, bitterness, violence, gloom, the heart can rest in peace and joy! O blessed peace!—not weakness, but the reverse of weakness; not an abdication, but a force, a light—the peace of quietude and love! Let the man who does not appreciate the human affections try to avail himself of them without his soul finding a sweet joy therein! It is useless to seek for this inestimable condition either below zero, in this thermometer we have constructed, or too high above.

For every virtue is capable of diminishing and of increasing; every virtue is matched with a vice; to every force correspond a weakness and an abuse. There are flames that warm and illumine, and flames that devour: it is one thing to play with matches, and another thing to bear onward an active flame, the torch of life—peace instead of turmoil, beauty instead of disorder. To rise to the active life—that is the aim! In other words, passion is a necessity. You will be happy when you have to exercise self-restraint; when your

heart inhabits an ideal mansion, peopled with affections so pure, so noble, so steadfast, that time, nay, Death itself, cannot wither them; when your physical being is conscious of the soul's stirring and sustaining power; when activity of mind quickens the pulse, and activity of emotion raises the temperature and sends a rush of energy to the brain.

The first effect of love, then, is produced on the individual; its secondary effect concerns what you love.

To keep you at the desired level, your affection must be reinforced with respect and esteem, for we live in what we love.

"Nothing is keener and more penetrating than love. Its nature is not to rest until it has plumbed, to the utmost of its power, the capacity, the depth, the whole being of the object towards which it is directed." [1]

We must, therefore, choose wisely the object of our love. The highest object of devotion in this world is a soul capable of advancing day by day towards perfection, of renewing its youth, of renovating itself, and of luring us thus towards progress by means of a reciprocal desire not to displease.

And then, it is the gift of God to love all that is beautiful.

[1] Richard, quoted by St. Bonaventure, *The Seven Roads to Eternity*.

"To win you and attract you to His love, God has lavished on man the whole beauty of His divinity. I say that God has lavished Himself on man, for I see no reserve in His great gift, nor has He retained anything of His plenitude that man may not share."[1]

Wherefore let us love physical beauty, the objects of our sight and touch, the perfume extolled in the *Song of Songs*. Let us love glory—glory beneficent and everlasting! "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and ever more!" Let us love the shadows, the hopes, the prosaic things of life. Let us mingle joy and love even with pain. O ye saintly souls, who love the sick beds of the poor, and infuse love into the most painful duties!—ye incomparable women, who possess the secret of life!—love all that ye do! Whether ye eat or sleep, whatever ye do, still love! Love your profession, your career, your destiny, so that your tree is full of sap. Love the past, the present, the future. You are a Frenchwoman: love the products of your land, the flowers of France, the French tongue. It is no question now of illusion or suggestion: give your heart's love. Love yourselves, since we are taught to love our neighbours as ourselves: show loving-kindness to yourselves, and do not wantonly drive thorns into your souls;

[1] Guerric.

learn to forget, even to pardon, so that ye give yourselves peace! Such was the grand, sublime aspiration of the women of the Renaissance—to love themselves. To declare war on gloom, as you should do on smoking-rooms and clubs; to rehabilitate a sacred joy; to substitute active virtue for passive virtue; was needful then, and is needful still. "Thou sayest nothing?—hold thy peace in love: thou dost cry aloud?—cry in love; thou art angry?—be angry in love; thou pardonest?—pardon for love. So long as love is the marrow of life, thy life can produce nought but good."[1]

"The soul of the law is to love, and to do all things through love: the rest is but the husk and shell of a good life."[2] And this is the strong life.

And now consult a physician: he will tell you that your vitality is enhanced: your eyes shine, your pulse beats more firmly; the blood-vessels dilate, the lungs expand, nutrition and secretion are more active. You love. And emotion has had the wonderful effect of knitting together the primitive desires: the physical instincts and suggestions; the moral instincts for affection, admiration, glory, self-love; the pleasure of possession, the joy of action, the flow of sympathy.

[1] St. Augustine on the First Epistle of St. John, Tract VII.
[2] Bossuet.

These are the motive forces of your being,[1] and in heightening them you elevate yourself, or rather, in the Apostle's words, you have all and abound.

Unless vitality is sometimes in excess, there is no life. It is really the vital electricity—

"Cette pale et faible étincelle
Qui vit en toi,
Elle marche, elle est immortelle,
Et suit sa loi ;
Pour la transmettre, il faut soi-même
La recevoir,
Et l'on songe à tout ce qu'on aime
Sans le savoir." [2]

A spark from Heaven has accomplished all: it is strength and light in the home, and even far beyond its bounds.

"I find thy image in every creature. Love, what madness in me to wish to flee thee!

"Love, I flee thee lest I yield thee my heart. I see that thou art transfiguring me, transforming me into the likeness of thyself, so that I no longer find a dwelling in my heart, and know myself no longer." [3]

Life's great question is, rightly to place our love.

[1] Dugald Stewart; Herbert Spencer.

[2] Alfred de Musset. ["This pale and feeble spark that lives in thee is ever moving; it is immortal and follows its law. To transmit it one needs must receive it oneself, and one thinks of all one loves, without knowing it."]

[3] Jacopone (Ozanam, *Poètes franciscains*, p. 203).

CHAPTER THE NINTH

A REASONABLE FOLLY

> "By love we ask, we seek, we knock, we find—and by love we keep what we have obtained."—ST. AUGUSTINE.
>
> "When we embrace in our spirit, by means of knowledge and love, some eternal thing, we live already in the heavens."—ST. BONAVENTURE, *Soliloquy*.
>
> "Love is the life of our soul, and without love it could not live."—HUGUES DE SAINT-VICTOR.

THE great business of life is to place our love well. Ah! how can it be that certain pedants of logic hold sensibility in fear, and dare not, as it were, pronounce the supreme word Love? Have they never known, then, anything but the abuse of the creature, and its shame? But in this regard reason also is prone to error, with perhaps worse results than the blunders of sensibility.

Life has its beauty and its happiness. Certainly we can put them to ill uses, yet it remains true that love is the perfect well-spring of life, or, to change the figure, it is the net in which God holds all his creatures. 'Tis the Lord's will to lay hold of us

"by the bonds of Adam."[1] "The beauty of the body is the guide towards beauty of soul; natural virtue raises us towards the divine life."[2]

The pure and lawful love of a thing that is altogether lovely is like leaven in bread—like the manna miraculously sent to the Hebrews as they crossed the desert. It gives so sweet a taste to life that we no longer love life itself, but the perfume of passion mingled with it, and we feel that this perfume comes from some serene and sunlit shore, where we trust to disembark. And then, if, along with peace and joy, we find strength and the promise of a life unending, wherewithal can the present life be better filled?

Enthusiasm leads us on, and at once we feel that it cannot remain fruitless. It must either disappear in instinct, in appetite, as electricity disappears into the earth, or else, having by some inexplicable process become chronic in our veins, it transforms us by a mysterious dynamic force. "The foot of the soul is love," as St. Bonaventure says in the *Seven Roads to Eternity*. We step on towards a gleaming light which advances ever before us, shining more and more unto the perfect day. We march towards it with firm tread, perfectly balanced,[3] in the normal order of our being.[4]

[1] St. Bernard. [2] St. Augustine.
[3] St. Gregory. [4] St. Anselm.

The physiologists, like the mystics, here bow the knee to the omnipotence of love. And in truth, could anything be clearer? Does not a mother work miracles for her children? Instead of narrowing the soul, calculating, counting all the costs, is she not at certain moments transported by the sacred poesy of life, electrified by passion?—does she not then discover abundant resources of will, attention, energy—even physical resources quite unsuspected? It seems as though her heart were unfathomable, and that at her passionate yearning an inexhaustible fountain wells up. Such is the law, even in instinct. Watch the hen with her brood, even though they be ducklings: how she stiffens her feathers and stands threateningly erect! Where are her former fears? What a madness of heroism! She does not weigh and ponder: she loves.

Enthusiasm, love as charity—"the unitive virtue," as the mystics say—is the strongest thing in the world; it even welds men's spirits, fusing them together, and making of them, as it were, one golden element. It reveals itself speedily, for it overflows, rejoicing in the truth, sympathising in another's failure, delighting in another's progress. And every life worthy of the name touches enthusiasm at some point; a time comes when an aptitude for great things and great deeds shines forth in us. Passion

engenders passion; this again sows the seed of passion, and passion gathers the fruit.

Emotion is as impossible to chain as electricity. It puts forth light and energy, and creates for itself an atmosphere of joy. Love is confident, eloquent; it believes, and is believed in; one devotes oneself heart and soul to a task, to an idea, to life; and enthusiasm evokes enthusiasm, as we see in the shining example of Joan of Arc.

Without passion, I ask you, what man exists who would start at a word for the ends of the earth to meet battle, fame, and death? Charlemagne, St. Louis, Napoleon—were all the enterprises they embarked in purely rational? What an endless tale of follies is history, if you come to that!—follies which raised the humble and downtrodden above themselves! follies which transfigured their very flesh! "Dead in the odour of sanctity"—pious neurotic creatures, prudently fortified against misfortune, and even they persuaded that love is strong as death![1] "Our God is a consuming fire." "I am come," He said, "to send fire on the earth"—the fire that purifies, the fire that fuses, the fire that burns the chaff, but has no effect on gold or bronze. "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked with us by the way?"

[1] St. Gregory.

Do you know the superb and immortal dialogue between the creature and the Creator, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi ?

St. Francis.—"Heaven and earth cry unto me, and proclaim aloud, and all the creatures it is my duty to love say unto me : Love love, which hath formed us for the purpose of winning thee to itself."

Christ urges St. Francis to command his feelings.

St. Francis.—"O Christ, Thou hast robbed me of my heart, and Thou bidst me bring order into my soul ! Thou thyself wert not able to withstand the force of love. Love made Thee descend from heaven to earth : Thou didst abase thyself to the low estate of a Man walking this world despised. Thou desiredst neither house nor land, but poverty alone, that Thou mightest make us rich. . . .

"Often didst Thou walk this earth like a drunken man : love was leading Thee like a purchased slave. In all things did Thou manifest nought but love, thinking never of thyself." [1]

Therein is happiness ; and it may be said that, through this very ecstasy of enthusiasm, which takes us out of ourselves, throwing us into life universal, and handing us captive to a higher will, this happiness is of the highest possible dignity and worth.

[1] Ozanam, *Poètes franciscains*, p. 98.

Happiness is a temporal love, having eternal roots ; a love that finds that which it seeks, and can still hope for that which it possesses.

Many sapient inquirers have sought to analyse it. Lord Avebury finds its elements in reading, travel, a well-ordered house, and the pursuit of science. Ruskin went a little farther: "Read, think, love, pray." But what are reading, thinking, praying, but an indirect conversation with men, a direct communion with God ?

I find the profoundest analysis in one simple phrase that gushed from the heart of a loving woman: "I can say," she wrote in reference to her husband, "that we have never loved each other so much as since the day we discovered that we both loved God."[1]

Every pure, sincere, profound love rises easily to the ideal abstraction, because it is self-sufficient ; it bears happiness within itself.

"Love is, in itself and by its very nature, a delight. It is a talent, and its own reward. A grand thing is love ! Of all the activities, the sentiments, the affections of the soul, love alone offers the creature the means of responding, if not completely, at least in part, to its author."[2]

Yes, indeed, every enthusiasm has a savour of

[1] Madame Craven, *Récit d'une sœur.*
[2] St. Bonaventure.

continuance : the prospect of death, or of any end whatsoever, would ruin it. Just as a fire sends its flame upward, so it appears natural to believe in God when the heart is happy ; it is then that faith is at its strongest.

"Every time that I take my walks, in quiet meditation and with peace in my soul, amidst a smiling country, whose every charm I relish," wrote Madame Roland, "it is a delicious thought that I owe these blessings to a divine intelligence ; I love, and long to believe. It is only in my dusty study, poring over my books, or in the giddy throngs of the world, breathing the corruption of men, that sentiment withers away, and reason looms darkly over clouds of doubt or the poisonous exhalations of unbelief."

If the beauty of a landscape penetrates us thus, what sentiments will not inspire two noble and pure hearts, beating in unison, completing each the other in this earthly life, and setting their common affections upon the deathless beyond ? Happiness will foster piety in them, and they will, I think, gain deeper insight into those burning maxims of the Gospel : "God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. . . . In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."

PART THE FOURTH

THE FRUITS OF LIFE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE WILL

> "Happy is the woman who has never found pleasure except in rational activities: she has the means of amusing herself all her life long."—MADAME NECKER.

WILL, action, joy, desire: in these is summed up man. In the primitive state these faculties were stimulated into activity for the satisfaction of material wants. Now, man's will, his deeds, pleasures, desires, must be actuated by love.

For life is never, cannot be, at a standstill. The æsthetic life is simply superimposed upon the practical life: it changes neither its logic nor its laws, but exerts an immense tonic influence upon it, and gives it a higher and wider scope.

A woman ennobles herself by not remaining a man's doll, and man in his turn gains nobility by not remaining her plaything.

What is the beautiful life? Alfred de Vigny calls it "a thought of youth realised by mature age." We ourselves should define it as a woman's emotion transmuted into a man's thought.

The initial mechanism of this higher process is

easily explained. Go to the piano and touch a key ; a chord vibrates : the first effect. The sound follows, striking upon the ears of those present, and awakening emotions and ideas : the second effect. We exactly resemble this piano. Without entering into technical details about the psychology of sensation, it may be remarked that, as we all know, when one of the cells of our body is excited, by the striking of a note, for instance, it answers with a proportionate vibration. This vibration, especially if the impact be sudden, takes the form of a wave. What is the result ? On the one hand, the particular organ concerned gaining in susceptibility to stimulus, every emotion seems to invite another ; and on the other hand, this emotion affects the whole organism, so as to transform itself into action.

It can only result in a purely instinctive action, what is called a "reflex movement" :[1] you are struck,—you utter a cry; you see an accident,—your heart beats more rapidly. It is, so to speak, the simple, primitive signal of the instinct of self-preservation. Or, again, instinct may prompt you to a positive, almost a rational action : for instance, if you fall into the water, you clutch at the nearest branch, without waiting to reflect.

This applies equally to the lower animals : they,

[1] Described with great care by Th. Ribot and Charles Richet.

indeed, have no control over these movements, which are common to them all, unless perhaps they are modified by some mechanical cause—habit, for instance, or, according to some men of science, heredity. But with human beings a personal element, the will, intervenes; the will can regulate these acts of instinct, and, at all events, it invariably seizes upon them, guides them, and extends them. It is this that constitutes the man: a prolonged sensation, which, when developed, gives birth to intellectual activity, attention, knowledge—such is the human being.

Once more, man possesses a moral keyboard, similar in all respects to this physical keyboard. He feels sensations that are purely moral, which, guided by the instinct of conscience, give rise to primitive acts of moral self-preservation. Here, again, the will operates in the same way, completing the evolution of the moral character into stability, strength, and order.

Thus there are in us two grades of will, as there are two grades of life: the first I will call the lower will; the second, the higher will. If women's sphere is the government of the emotions, they may play with both hands on the two registers; and if they catch false notes, or notes that are merely harsh and metallic, it is for them to tell us so, in order that the necessary remedies may be sought.

I have now rapidly described the mechanism: to explain its action would be much more difficult. Philosophers are forced to recognise as the starting-point of the higher volition what they call 'the moral sense,' and theologians call the 'grace of God': on either view it is the grace of love. It is to this that our will rings responsive; every day men sacrifice themselves, go to their death, win triumphs, for causes that are patently bad, whilst pure reason is a far less effectual stimulus to activity. The volition is sometimes good or bad according to the emotion prompting it: a good instrument can but show up a detestable touch. If women really knew the capabilities of this mechanism, we should be almost entirely at their mercy. Happily they do not know, and they often believe that the notes of the human instrument sound of their own accord, or else that it is necessary to fall on the keyboard with the full force of fist and arm.

Whoever knows how to rule our emotions will act upon our will. No doubt we have a free will, and every intelligent, earnest, well-bred, well-balanced man acts upon himself. We learn to walk, to suppress useless movements, to make those that are useful. But how feeble this primary knowledge becomes in presence of an emotion! When our heart is stirred, what reasoning, think

you, will prevail? "We haven't the head for that!" What a house of cards, at the mercy of every wind that blows, and only too ready to vanish utterly! What a fine puppet-show, where reason conscientiously performs the antics, while all the time the heart is pulling the strings! An idea is so conscious of its inferiority to an emotion, that sometimes, as M. Sully-Prudhomme says, it tries to simulate the forms of emotion. But it is always found out!

There are men, however, of vigorous will, who attain no slight measure of self-mastery. Externally they are unassuming creatures, with clear eyes and steady nerves, rather uninteresting, to whom the habit of self-command has given an air of frigidity, sometimes of hesitancy. They live in a perpetual conflict of motives, which their art consists in balancing, or, more correctly, in cancelling one by another, in the fashion of a clearing-house. The structure of their will rests on a principle of equilibrium; to a present misery they will oppose an ideal happiness, to a selfish impulse a pleasure of affection, or *vice versâ*. These creatures of reason and will would be ashamed to yield to the seductions of the imagination; their prudence seems to them reason itself. But yet, in spite of themselves, a passion must expand their soul, a shock of moral emotion must develop in

them a higher volition, if they are not to lose a great part of the powers they have so dearly bought. Pure reason weakens passion; passion, on the contrary, multiplies intellectual force. It is natural enough that passion should produce intellectual energy, since passion is the higher power; but an emotion of desire, love, fear, sharpens and amplifies the most obtuse understanding,[1] gives it a range almost miraculous. Just as an artist, concentrating his attention on an object that pleases him, sees things which other eyes fail to discover, so in the art of life the look of love has an immense force, not only in the moral world, but in the physical world also: witness the strange phenomenon, as yet so little understood, of telepathy.

In thinking constantly of a person whom we love, we come to anticipate almost perfectly his actions or his thoughts. Our whole being, if it is to exert its full influence, positively needs to concentrate itself upon a single end. The fixed idea may become a fell disease; but a fixed affection is a blessing, because it is now, not an end, but a motive force.

So true is this, that no religion has placed upon its altars a merely intellectual abstraction. No one would worship it. All religions set upon their altars our passion, our ardent instincts, the image of God

[1] Ribot.

Himself; they promise us the sight of God, the fruition of life, perfect happiness, perfect love, to be ours without our striving, eternal in the heavens, a harvest of pure emotions. That is why a religion that is wholly a religion of love has given us the power to work miracles. The Master has told us that at one vivifying touch of God's love, the deaf would hear, the dumb speak, the palsied, the lame, the demoniac, take up their beds and walk.

That is true still. There are in the force of emotion riches that we little suspect—physical riches; and, in still greater measure, moral riches. Within us lie a host of ideas and latent sentiments in the embryonic state. These germs develop, even without our knowledge; we only perceive them when they have sprung to maturity. "Our heads are full of fine ideas of which we can know nothing." And in truth, let me observe in passing, there has always been a certain genuine side in sorcery, namely, the quest after these unknown treasures.

In this sense it is the duty of all of us to be something of sorcerers. A lady wrote to me one day that a book of mine had led her into certain recesses of her heart thitherto unknown, and helped her to take stock of sentiments to whose existence she had till then been blind.

That which a writer will attempt by a chance

word, women ought unceasingly to do. They have in their hands the torch which will light up the dim cold caverns of our souls. They have only to raise it aloft and enter. But see! many take the torch, and few have resolution to use it. Or mayhap they know not how; for the loveliest eyes may see nothing, the loveliest hands grasp nothing: their curiosity perhaps is weak, or they are scared at their own shadow; sometimes also they fear that to make a man conscious of his worth would be to lose their influence on him; whereas it is rather the contrary that is true.

A woman must constitute herself the guardian, and, so to speak, the purveyor of emotion: "I have set you as guardian over my house." Love with all your mind the man whom your heart loves. If he asserts himself, he does you good service. Know how to relax your ostensive guidance, spontaneously, at the right moment; to withdraw quietly within yourself, so as to help this man to open out like a flower towards family and country, society, and God. Be scrupulous and steadfast. When we say, "I will pluck this fruit," our arm rises of its own accord. Do not miss the chance of plucking happiness for want of raising your arm!

A man must needs hate and love. The two emotions are identical at bottom: hatred is only love reversed—the backward movement of the

machine. Love and hatred are our springs of action. The engine-driver fires his engine, tests its works, and on occasion opens the safety-valve. There you have it!—he wants to keep up a brisk, bright, clear flame, blazing steadily.

It may be said that, while a sentiment of affection manifestly can awake and heighten in a man the elements of will, it seems harder to admit that the assistance of a woman can substantially further this will's development. For the will is only valuable by its own strength; to assist it is almost to put it in tutelage, and are women really qualified to exercise so high a moral tutelage? That would presuppose the possession of a vigour of soul not always native to them.

Truth to tell, the moral weakness of women is, I believe, somewhat exaggerated. What they really need is, not so much some one to lean on, as some one to link hands with. Their weakness is sometimes due to defects of education, or the fact that will, with them, has never come to maturity, and fails to provide them with trustworthy means of defence; or it may result from the trials of life. Alas! it is too true that we see pitiable women drifting aimlessly through the world, like ships disabled and left rudderless in the dark! In other words, their will, like ours, is human, and subject to the same vicissitudes. But weakness of will is not a

contagious disease; on the contrary, it is cured by contact with another weakness, so that the weakness of women is actually turned to strength, is remedied, by their sensibility. A woman of weak will may minister with admirable efficacy to a man equally weak, and thereby she will minister to herself. That is the glory of women: even in circumstances of the greatest affliction they have this wonderful gift, the power to dry and conceal their own tears for the sake of giving us back our strength of will. I will say more: a good and thoughtful woman fulfils this office instinctively almost every day, and knows, whatever the circumstances may be, how to drop the quiet, comforting word in season which inspires us with love for a duty, an earnest purpose, life.

Returning to the objection that a support of this kind would annihilate the power of will in us, that seems difficult to grant, even for men of exceptional endowments. It must be admitted that we need more often to be ruled than to rule, and all the turmoil of our resolutions and our rages, all our caprices, inconstancies, discontents, only prove one thing: that our machinery is sadly in need of a competent manager.

The fact is brought out in an infinite variety of ways; but, as a general rule, the weaker a man's will is—that is, the more indefinite his personality

—the more certainly do the primitive instincts resume in him the place left vacant by the kindly sentiments. Shall we do ourselves harm, then, if we first calm these unruly sensations, and then patiently investigate the causes, great and small, physical and moral, of our weakness, and set ourselves to remove them one after another?

Sometimes it is the machinery itself that is worn out or broken, and then, to restore its power of movement, a quite exceptional effort is needed. In this case, indeed, the end will probably be the total subjection of the masculine will; but how can that be avoided? If a man is sick and compelled to keep his bed, can he lay the blame on his nurse? Now, it is abundantly evident that the will is subject to real diseases;[1] in particular, paralysis of the will, which attacks people in other respects perfectly healthy: a lesion in the communications between the intelligence and the activities. The sufferers are perfectly conscious of their plight: one of them, after his cure, thus explained his condition to Dr. Esquirol: "The failure of activity arose from the fact that my sensations were too feeble to exert any influence on my will." Another said that he felt quite sound, except that every action lacked the

[1] See Ribot, *The Maladies of the Will;* and Jules Payot, *The Training of the Will.*

sensation proper to it and the pleasure that should accompany it.[1]

Such conditions are developed more easily than might be imagined among people either over-refined or naturally apathetic. No brain, however well organised it may appear, but is sometimes crossed by wild impulses, which are spurned by the will; but sometimes even sound and vigorous brains have empty compartments in which the will is inoperative, leaving the field free to local weaknesses.

I admit that in these cases, in which the phenomena are almost entirely physiological, the co-operation of sentiment is inevitably degraded to a corresponding impotence; this, too, almost wholly physical. The strongest affection cannot but shrink into itself, becoming for the nonce a sort of suggestion or hypnotism. Such a love, alas! is now only the shadow of itself; but its goal is just as high—indeed, higher than ever. For instance, the sort of material relationship established between a hypnotist and his 'subject' has often been described. The will is enchained, the subject feels for his master a sort of love, reverential, profound, yet tyrannical, for the hypnotist has to keep his thoughts fixed on his subject, to watch him, and to remain constantly within reach. This very

[1] Ribot.

unwholesome dependence may disappear by degrees, merging either into a real affection or into hatred. This malady exists, without question: the poor creature subject to it becomes, as it were, a mere piece of machinery whirling in space. But who would seriously seek to base a theory of sensibility on this frightful derangement of the physical apparatus?

. . . . . .

Lord, Thou didst teach us that, ignorant as we are, we should speak all tongues: that, knowing nothing, we should teach all nations, lisping in their ears that sacred word, that word of thunder, 'Love'! Lord, each time Thou dost rise again within us, each time a beautiful idea pierces us with a shaft of flame, and revives the dull ashes of our dead life, Thou appearest first to woman! This was in days of old Thy resurrection to Thyself, as if the miracle of love were very Thee! And from the lips of women, sowers of sensual pleasure, Thou didst bring the fruit of grace. Was she so lovely, she who saw Thee even as Thou didst leave the tomb? I know not. But those words that fell from her lips, those tears that coursed down her cheeks, those rays that flashed from her eyes, those perfumes poured forth by her hands, that wealth of hair which flowed like a garment about her and enwrapped Thy feet—all these were the gift of the

soul—the art by whose aid Will rises from the ashes of a woman's heart.

Princes and priests had set their seal upon Thy tomb. So likewise does the world: it sets its seal on human things, but all that is divine in man passes through the stone. And verily this divine part is pure, resplendent: it is the true man.

The religious people, on the other hand, who would fain build life up on virtue alone, and mistrust the beautiful as a perilous lure, and love in general as a weakness—even they are forced into inconsistency and the acknowledgment that, after all, love is the chief factor in the true development of the will. Set your affections upon high things, on God Himself; lay down your arms at the feet of the Divine passion, and your will shall be a fortress impregnable. "To love is the great, the only concern. We make all things stepping-stones to love, and if all else fails, we love, and love is enough."[1]

[1] Ollé-Laprune.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

ACTION

> "The hours have wings, and rise towards the Author of time to recount to him the use we make of them. All our prayers cannot persuade one of them to return or to slacken its pace. The squanderings of each minute are testimonies accumulated against us on high. Surely, if we thought of that, we should not suffer them to depart save with better tidings; nor should we permit them to fly away with empty hands, or else laden with perilous instruction."
>
> "Wer immer strebend, sich bemüth,
> Den können wir erlösen." [1]—GOETHE.

WE must act through love, and for love's sake. The will would be nugatory if we did not act. I do not say that we should fuss and fume: what is required is a higher activity, controlled by reason, actuated by love, directed by the will: in other words, purposeful and well employed. But we gain nothing by being too anxious to economise life, by sipping at it too leisurely: it is then like a potion becoming more and more unpalatable in the medicine-chest; and after all, if you do get four times

[1 "He that is ever panting in restless endeavour, him we can redeem."]

as much into life in Paris as in certain provincial townlets, you do not die there four times as fast.

"What am I to do, then?" some one will ask. My dear Madam, simply make use of your faculties.

The pleasure of action is a pleasure of power: mainly physical in youth, it gradually becomes intellectual as the animal in us wanes.

If we are only capable of physical activity—well, invite us to go horse-riding; let us be toreadors or rope-dancers; what does it matter?—but don't let us sit still in idle dreaming, or enslaved in bondage to a mechanical life: eating, gambling, scandal-mongering, and so forth.

If we are capable of wrestling with science and thought, set us face to face with intellectual things.

Not that we need surrender ourselves to them body and soul. The thing is, to love art for life's sake, and not life for art's sake. If we hear a piece of music, for instance, either its intellectual effect ceases with the sound, or it leaves us a simple emotion which we carry away with us. Don't let us strive to manufacture an interest in art, but to strengthen and illuminate our life.

Unhappily, either from apathy, love of pleasure, ignorance, jealousy, or some other cause, there are not a few women who extinguish rather than shed light. To have extinguished their husband is a triumph for them, and they do so with the most

artless candour. They fancy they are doing him a service by reducing him to their own stature. I spoke of jealousy. There are also more women than we suspect who are jealous of their husband's activity, and would fain have him tied to their apron-strings.

The real victory would have been to urge him to follow his bent. What would be impossible to an activity impregnated with love? The field of human activity is boundless; and when a man gives love, devotion, and the noble pleasure produced by intellectual activity a place above his profession or the exigences of life, his work is doubled in value.

If a man does not know and does not care what his bent is, his wife should not hesitate to take him by the hand and lead him. Why not direct him towards a high object, it matters not what—social work, for instance, or even an ambition? Ambition is a vexatious and baneful counsellor when its only aim is worldly success. It may become a wholesome and salutary motive if an affection is its reward; it then takes a rightful place in the scheme of life. Charity has such a place; it has been well pointed out by Mr. Robert Woods and the Comte d'Haussonville that charity is not to be considered as a social luxury, nor even as a mere service to humanity, but as a real function of the

social economy—I will add, a necessity of the individual life. It is *par excellence* the function of love. Now, society can never be saved by legislative enactments, as politicians maintain. "It is saved by persons; what is needed is the personal influence, the continuous intimacy, the individual interest taken in human affairs by those who have drunk of the fountains of knowledge, and acquired the philosophic and historic breadth of mind necessary if we are really to love our neighbours. Knowledge thus acquired . . . will but furnish one stimulant the more to natural pity: each of us without exception must be an apostle."[1]

The man led by a worthy ambition of love has nothing in common with the vulgar intriguer; he is a worker-bee as compared with a drone. He is an open-handed giver, and scorns to ask of others. He loves good men, even among the humble, and hates bad men, even among the powerful. He will be led by any feminine hand to the active morality of self-devotion, apart from calculations and theories, and thus the bond of charity will be created, which is the unstinted outpouring of love.

Leading him thus, Madam, you would end by provoking the man, formerly immersed in his profession or his idleness, to acts of enthusiasm.

[1] I borrow this excellent passage from Madame Bentzon (*Les Américaines chez elles*).

You will talk to him in the evening; you will powerfully impress him by showing him the human verities on their fairest sides; you will get him to read history in order to carry him away from himself. You will demolish his fixed ideas.

The art comes quite spontaneously. The English, a people essentially practical, but original and individualistic, have given us the most vigorous thinkers of the past century. Make people think, and action will follow idea. Many illustrious examples will occur to you: Madame de la Sablière, for instance, and the way she kept that simple soul La Fontaine at work. Was she a genius? Probably not. Witty? I do not know. But it is very certain that she had taste, and what is still more, good-nature. It is not unlikely that we may find in the delicate, suave, artlessly simple style of the fabulist many a trace of his desire to please that lady. Still, we must not exaggerate the importance of feminine guidance, and I am not unaware that literature for ladies has never been very successful. But I repeat that, in a general way, women are absolutely responsible for the moral and intellectual governance of society. To begin with, novels are written for them; without them, the theatre would not exist; they read, buy, listen, criticise; consequently, they are at least indirectly responsible for all the shameful rubbish of the day. But further, their direct opinions and

decrees cannot be neglected. It is for them to polish men, and to create an atmosphere of refinement and peace, in default of which the most vigorous minds will always lack something.

Even if they exercise no direct influence except on one man, their husband, this is sufficient, for the ideas of a man, however small his intellectual endowment, quickly spread.

To love well and work well—that is the simple formula for leading a pure and strong life, and for developing one's activity.

Earnest work gives us a value in our own eyes, and, consequently, peace of mind: it weds us, so to speak, to ourselves, and saves us from that double-mindedness to which feeble or excitable natures are subject. If you drink out of a glass, it becomes empty; if you drink at the spring itself, you will never exhaust it.

But none of these virtues is inherent in work itself: we saw in the first pages of this book that work is a mechanical thing; however pleasant it may be, however much loved, it has to become impregnated with the qualities of affection; that is, it has to create, and to bestow.

To create! Men of gloom and pessimism are impotent folk—people of passive sensations. They believe themselves to be fatigued, overwrought; living a collective existence, submerged in the mass,

they have no opinions, they become extinct. It behoves you to teach them that life consists in doing individual work, that happiness does not proceed solely from investments: inspire them with energy and make them self-productive.

To bestow! For it is a strange law that our labour, to become fruitful, must be transmitted through others. Every effort of will is relative in character, an adaptation to our surroundings, then an act in which other people are concerned. Man is happy for his own sake, but by means of others. The Christian idea of happiness is, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, even to the length of sacrificing one's own life a ransom for many.

It is easy to see how deadening is the lust of gain, and how subdued to the tyranny of their surroundings are the people who are too well served.

Love, on the contrary, works wonders with nothing: spontaneous in origin, it attains to a sublimity of self-devotion. And, what is a still finer thing, it faces with a light heart all the toils and sorrows it encounters. Not that it renders the burden a light one, but it softens it and rejoices to bear it. Were I required to define the happy life, I should call it 'a pleasant tiredness.' The same spirit inspired Margaret, the sister of Francis I, in the choice of her admirable motto, *Jamais oisive ni mélancolique*.[1]

[1] ['Never idle nor dull.']

An old and pious legend tells how the Virgin appeared to St. Elizabeth of Hungary and gave her this precept of life : " Love God, love your neighbour as yourself (that is, of course, the good in him), hate your enemy." And, in truth, we must not shrink from the lash of opposition ; without it we should never advance, but crawl sluggards.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

JOY

> "Ofttimes my body became so light that it lost its ponderosity, sometimes to such a degree that I no longer felt my feet touching the ground. So long as the body is in its ecstasy, it remains as dead, and often is absolutely powerless to act. . . . Though in general one does not lose consciousness, yet it has befallen me to be totally reft of it: this was a rare state, and of no long duration. Most often, consciousness is retained: but one experiences a strange agitation; and though outward activity is impossible, one does not cease to hear: it is as a confused sound coming from afar."—ST. THERESA.

BUT, I shall be told, even with the measured activity of which we have just spoken, it is not always possible to move forward. There are moments when one feels an imperious need of standing still: "What!" cries Browning somewhere,[1] "is there no deed which, once accomplished, will stay the course of time? Is there no means of wresting from earth the secret of heaven?"

Work, you say: do something: that is all very well; but, lo! when the burst is over, the life

[1] [I have failed to trace the source.]

given, we are left empty and more unhappy than before, nay, positively ill : what have we gained ?—illusions of joy and greatness, then a goodness, a benevolence, and a generosity carried perhaps to the extreme. These are the very symptoms of mental paralysis and insanity ! I am poisoned. Alcohol, opium, morphia, tobacco, were all at my disposal—and I chose love ! The more fool I ![1]

Why not give it up, then, to dream of joy, and settle down to a comfortable life of take all and give none ?

That is the teaching of Hindoo philosophy : first, to rise above sin, and to see clearly into the nature of things ; that is what I did in the first stage of my life. Then, to relinquish the judgment, and preserve only the pleasure of inward satisfaction : that is what I did in the second. At the mystic altitude at which I have arrived, this ancient philosophy now counsels me to enjoy, gently, and as vaguely as possible, a physical and moral well-being in all the comfort of peace and *far niente*.

What good is memory, and even indifference itself, if it be conscious ? To exist without pleasure and without pain—what could be better ?[2]

This is a very tempting philosophy. But no, it is an impossibility ! At the very moment of my writing these lines, a rushing mighty wind is

[1] Dr. de Fleury. [2] Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire.

blowing before my windows, through the tops of the oaks and firs. The broad pond is in commotion. There is quivering, clashing, rumbling all around: wind and water and trees — all are in agitation, forceful, full of life, and the earth itself seems to rejoice in the harsh music of its phenomenal palpitation. Tell me, can I live outside this life? Should I be less grand, less resolute, less sincere than these profound realities that make so much for simplicity? Should I not flow on like this brook? It may be that I have over-tasked my activity; sought too sedulously for sentiments precious and rare, unpublished impressions: that my liquor has always been too thin, and my glass too small. There are hours of lassitude and despondency: but these are not the hours of true joy. Let as delve out for our sentiments, in fresh air and bright sunshine, a safe and pleasant channel, in which they may flow a clear and calm and smiling stream, impeded neither by the briars nor by the flowers along the banks.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

DESIRE

"Charity ought always to increase. Power grows with love: the exercise of love purifies the heart in teaching it to love more and more. God is within us when we love."—BOSSUET.

"In pleasure I regret desire."—GOETHE.

"Life gives a relish for life; enthusiasm augments the faculty and the need of enthusiasm; exertion strengthens us."—RICARDO.

FORTUNATELY, happiness undergoes transformations, and appears to us in changing lights, like the revolving rays from a lighthouse. For our appetite for change is the root of all our disquietudes. We want new plays, new novels, new fashions in dress—no matter what, so long as it be new; we demand novelty also in the moral life. And this being so, there is nothing more immoral than to represent virtue under various forms of monotony, as some good souls do.

We are creatures of change, of ebb and flow, and everything around us is subject to like intermissions with ourselves. Do we not see, year by year, Nature dying, to revive again in fulness of time? Why is vitality intenser on the mountains than in

the plains—these carnations of heightened colour; these pansies, pricked like stars upon a smiling earth; the streamlets singing as they flow; the frolic wind? It is because Death's sleep is here longer: it will more rapidly return; and consequently life is brighter, the flowers are fresher, everything is young.

We too spend a part of our life in sleep, like all animals endowed with a measure of psychic existence: we have two lives, the one obscure, buried in animality, haunted by vague memories, by presentiments perhaps; the other born anew every morning with the light, and worthless unless sustained by the first. And our actions, our affections, our emotions—how these too wax and wane! Even did we yearn with an ardent yearning for lingering joys, eternal joys, can we prevent enforced separations, ingratitudes, forgetfulnesses—still less absences and death?[1]

It is this that cripples our will and poisons our pleasures. Our life is like the whirl of a squirrel in a cage. We pass from obliviousness to hope. The objects of our love are fragile: our love itself is not. The agonies of despair which are due to

[1] "Life to-day is painful, full of dissatisfaction and wretchedness. There are only two issues possible: to suppress desire and be reabsorbed in inaction; or to exalt desire, aiming at the life eternal. As Solon said, only when dying does one know if one has been happy."—M. DE FLEURY.

this fact, and which cause some men to oscillate so strangely between the lowest carnal sensations and seemingly religious or even mystical sensations, arise habitually from their not having followed our method: they say that all love but the material is an idle dream, and then expect to derive inexhaustible happiness from an object whose season is so quickly past.

Let us remember, on the other hand, that, little by little, we have risen in the scale of sentiments.

With the expansion of our individuality, we have felt the need of sharing it. Thence proceeds marriage, then the collective family feeling—a wider sentiment which links us to ancestors whose life we regard ourselves, up to a certain point, as sharing, and to children in whom we hope to live again. Woman has wrought this miracle upon us. She has followed it with a second: she has raised us from this collectivism, still a personal sentiment, to another and a still wider sentiment, the sentiment of social life, when, by the agency of work filled with love and charity, we have found a joy for our own souls.

But we find now that this no longer suffices; it no longer fills our heart. We long for other things, because what we have loved is as circumscribed, as perishable, as fallacious, and as fluctuating as ourselves. We never reach the end of our love,

and to satisfy it we should have to rise from the social life to the transcendent life—absolute communism. In the words of a Father of the Church: "The love of our neighbour is the cradle of the love of God."

"Malgré moi, l'infini me tourmente." [1]

Doubtless the infinite troubled the woman of love, the Samaritan who had had seven husbands; and Christ, piercing with His searching glance the secret of this sorely battered soul, brought her to her knees with His promise of a water of which "whosoever drinketh shall never thirst."

The thirst that we experience is called desire, and thus either life is wholly destitute of art, or its art leads us in the end to pursue our will transformed into desire.

The sole joy of life is to love, and to love our surroundings. The only inexhaustible joy is an inexhaustible love, a love so great that, while filling life, it remains always a desire: "The supreme felicity will consist in the eternal possession of what we love." [2] "Life will be perfectly happy when it is eternal." [3] For the moment, we experience impressions rather than joys; and these sensations wear us out, or can only quicken our life if we remove all ideas of precariousness, cessation, death,

[1] Alfred de Musset.

[2] St. Bonaventure, *Soliloquy*. [3] St. Augustine.

and seal them with an illusion of permanence. Then only will they take their true rank. Now, as, for us, there is no such thing as permanence, we must with every pleasure mingle a desire. Hence desire is the law of happiness and love.

Happy, then, are they in whom desire springs eternal—that is, who go gently through life without demanding too much from it, and who do not wither and stale their happiness all at once. Hesitate to say, "I am happy." That cannot be. Say, "I desire to be happy." The grass of the fields invites the life-giving rain from heaven: night is necessary to day.

Again, every religion imposes on man a number of voluntary renunciations — 'mortifications,' as they are very justly called. Herein lies the guarantee of happiness, the lightning-rod of life; herein is the assurance of joy, the necessary intermittence.

For desire itself would be ineffectual and would speedily tire us if it were fruitless. It requires a satisfaction, whose name is progress. Human love is afflicted with so radical a restlessness that it cannot fix itself: satisfaction is not found in the good, but in the better. We are happy when we leave behind a less good, and look forward to a greater; when we remember vanished sorrows, and hope for a joy; when we see ourselves in a position

superior to our neighbour's, or to a former position of our own. All things urge us upward.

This desire is a source of anguish unless it is blended with love and faith; it is a veritable joy if so well nourished by faith and charity as to become a hope. Hope, then, is our true joy. Watch a dog as it starts off for the chase: how it leaps and gambols and licks its master's hand; how full of delight! The huntsmen ride off, and the joy of the hounds is moderated and restrained, as though it were already conscious of its end. This is also the history of the joy of children in expectation of a toy, of the lover in presence of his future bride, of us all. The fastidious like to tantalise their appetite a little, to rise from table while still hungry. Some women only love the men who appear able to do without them, and who do not immoderately insist on present realities.

How many desires are left with us by a pleasant reminiscence!

The Greek mob cried out to a nobleman whose two sons had had the good luck to carry off on the same day the two great prizes of their athletic games: "Die, Diagoras, for thou canst not end by becoming a god!" What indeed was left for him to wish for? Nothing. So nothing remained but to die.

Hope we must needs always cherish. Just as

in the economic world progress is the rule of life, so love forges an immense chain binding us to Life itself — Life immanent, inexhaustible. The soul's highest desire is a prayer, for the end of love is God.

PART THE FIFTH

THE HIGHER LIFE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE ASSAULT OF SORROW

> "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth: therefore enjoy pleasure. And behold, this also was vanity."
>
> "There is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."—ECCLESIASTES ii. 1; iii. 2.
>
> "Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain. . . .
> Forget thy life and love. . . .
> Forget the world's dull scorn;
> Forget lost health, and the divine
> Feelings which died in youth's brief morn;
> And forget me, for I can never
> Be thine."—SHELLEY.

IT would be an exquisite dream always to desire what we have; unhappily it is a dream. We do not always meet with happiness, but we never escape sorrow. At the allotted moment our house of joy topples down, or is hotly assailed. Life resembles a cathedral: first, the massive crypt, dark, subterranean; then the lightsome nave, soaring into the sky, filled with light and colour, but artfully sustained on the outside by graceful buttresses of sentiment, slenderly built, and at the mercy

of many a pelting storm. The higher it rises, the more is life exposed to suffering and woe; the higher a person finds himself placed, the more is it his mission to suffer. And nothing is more logical: sorrow is an emotion—betokening weakness, but yet an emotion; and in consequence, its action upon the more exquisite and extensive sensibilities is all the more pronounced. The higher our conception of happiness, the more we must expect to suffer: sorrow has all the characteristics of joy in the inverse direction; it sets the nervous system in action, to ruin it; it appeals to our faculties of mental association and memory, to effect their dissolution; it produces fear instead of desire. And our tears are ever flowing: the tears of sorrow are more abundant and more beautiful than those of joy, love, passion: they culminate in the sob, that distressful spasm which is the honour of the human race, for the animals know it not.

Alas! I have felt the jealousy of God. It has smitten me to the earth; and nothing is left to me. I have lost my all, seen all my loved ones die; I mourn in anguish, and am nothing but sorrow.

It is here that art seems to break down. How shall I find consolation? How can I love a life so wretched?

They tell me that, were we stronger, we should

not suffer; were we wiser, we should know how to abolish suffering.

I read in books that the little troubles add variety to life, and that great troubles eclipse many of the lesser: that sorrow is a mere word; that we ought to rise superior to it, never heed it. These, and many another fine sentiment!

But I find no solace there. "Is patience in affliction happiness?"[1] On Calvary itself, where Sorrow was glorified, I hear the cry: "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

[1] St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book xiv.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE MALADIES OF SENSIBILITY

SORROW, nevertheless, imposes on us the necessity of defending ourselves. Already, in dealing with the weaknesses of the will, we have seen how necessary it is to combine all our physical and moral forces into a perfect unity.

So is it also with the special maladies of desire —fixed ideas, irritant cravings, optimistic dreams. Still more strongly is the concentration of our forces imposed upon us in face of the deep-seated maladies of sensibility itself—in face of Sorrow, the great foe to Will and Desire. Ah! how difficult a science is the practical accomplishment of this union! But we shall be permitted to state some of its elementary principles, for this science is essential to the art of life. There are times when life shrinks from contact with any amiable sentiment, and falls in ruins. At such times a vast effort is needed to reconstruct it, and to restore its capacity for happiness.

It is wrong, in general, to divorce moral pain from physical pain. There are two pains, but

they are twins, and the science of the one may well be the science of the other: they have a like mechanism,[1] almost identical causes, the same forms of expression, the same effect. Unlike joy and happiness, which spring from the expansion of life and love, every pain, physical or moral, arises from a restriction, a constriction, and displays itself by a loss of moral or physical pleasure.

According to the apparent nature of the ill from which we suffer, we consult either a physician or a moralist. Neither can, nor indeed ought, to effect anything but a partial cure, proportionate to their competence. And yet, as Bishop Brook says, "there is but one life, the life eternal," and this synthetic life cannot be sustained by methods wholly physiological, nor by methods wholly moral, as the 'Christian scientists' of America would have us believe.[2] Yes, there is but one life: in other words, in addition to pharmacy and philosophy, both infinitely useful, another science is required, to envisage the being as a whole, in its equilibrium and its synthesis, and to tend it on both sides at once. Let us call this science 'moral medicine.'

[1] Ribot.

[2] See *The Modern Expression of the Oldest Philosophy*, by Katherine Coolidge.

To make this clear, let us take for an example a mixed malady—fear.

Fear, including its manifold varieties (fright, anxiety, sadness, and so on, down to timidity and indolence), is a malady at once physical and moral; a simultaneous and reciprocal depression. The will suffers a sort of paralysis, and instinct takes the upper hand; physically, the circulation of the blood is retarded, the cheeks pale, the eyes become fixed, the constricted blood-vessels grip the heart, the muscles twitch, the digestive apparatus gives way.

These are the general symptoms. To deal with the matter more specifically, let us dwell for a little on one of the varieties of fear—melancholy, often endemic in the old countries. Although sorrow has sometimes been celebrated as beautiful, and melancholy extolled as sublime, sorrow is a malady of depression, which may arise from personal unthrift or from racial degeneracy. Even though it be latent, it is accompanied by a physical decadence more or less marked, and by a moral decadence not less remarkable. The sensibility seems diminished, as if certain recesses in it, containing old recollections that one would fain forget, were walled up; memories fallen there like a heap of dead leaves, but not yet dead enough to become the fertilisers of a new vitality. The memory, when

interrogated, instead of associating ideas according to its normal function, dissociates them. And it is even a matter for self-congratulation if the sensibility and the memory perform their functions badly, for they might not act at all. A wit once said that love is composed of "big words before, little words during, and rough words after." In this case, indeed, the sensibility and the memory subsist and are but perverted; the terrible thing is silence.

The effect on the will is naturally to lessen its resilience; and weakness of will is often the only visible sign of the diseased condition. There are many women, sad and unsatisfied in soul, who are so habituated to their sadness that they succeed in hiding it, and even fail to realise it themselves. Their malady kills them; sometimes it kills also those about them, and yet its only symptoms are a certain physical inertness or a certain moral instability.

The first thing required of the science of 'moral medicine,' and by no means the easiest, is to form an accurate diagnosis of the disease, and I venture to say that it would be a fatal error in such cases to mistrust the ministry of women. Their quickness, their subtlety of attention, their gentleness of spirit, enable them, at every passing moment, to perceive many of the slight

and fleeting but decisive symptoms. And even should they not care to cultivate the science farther, nothing is easier to them than to drop a little balm into the moral wounds they discern.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE SOURCES OF SORROW

"Every one that doeth evil hateth the light."—ST. JOHN iii. 20.

THE nature of the evil once admitted, it remains to determine its origin. Here is a creature of gloom; whence does his trouble proceed?

Physiologists at once point out his physical defects; his breathing is bad, his heart or his stomach is out of order. Here, they will tell us, are the sources of his gloom; what he needs is to recuperate his physical forces.

Yes, indeed, moral gloom does often proceed from a morbid lack of tone, or from so-called cerebral disturbances, which are themselves due to disorder in the organs of emotion—the liver, the stomach, the bowels. A convalescent, gripped by the tedium of inactivity, even though free from mental worry and disquietude, will only regain his spirits with his strength. In these cases, clearly, the chief reliance must be placed on physical treatment.

There are likewise, apart from settled gloom, a

host of other moral debilities in which a principally physiological character may be recognised; for instance, the melancholy of certain young girls, the mental torpor affecting people at certain mountain altitudes, the nervousness of Napoleon at Waterloo, the mental paralysis accompanying sick headache, and so on.

Dr. Bouchard has shown how closely indolence and lack of moral energy are allied to a sluggish digestion, which may indeed be the prime cause. Jealousy is a weakness of the same nature. Many troubles are due to defective respiration; the croupier at Monaco was clever enough to make his fortune by keeping the windows around the gamblers hermetically closed. It is very certain that conditions of this sort are mitigated by sunshine, fresh air, cold water, rather than by good advice. Far be it from me to offer counsel to the President of the Chamber of Deputies; but I fancy that during a 'scene' he would obtain better results from copious draughts of air, and, as a last resource, plentiful douches of cold water, than by ringing his bell, setting the ushers bawling, or letting fly shafts of his wit.

However that may be, no one will dispute that certain physical conditions arise from moral causes, and that certain maladies can only be effectively treated by persevering with moral means. That has

always been recognised in various classical cases—nervous maladies, loss of memory, neurasthenia, paralysis, hysteria in various forms; and science will learn more and more to apply the same treatment to other diatheses — diabetes, for instance, hitherto considered purely physical; irritability, which is a moral ailment, due to utter weariness of an uncongenial occupation.

There is one cause of feebleness generally regarded as incurable, namely, old age. Certainly, we cannot alter our age, and age puts a terribly different complexion on things: at forty, at sixty, 'tis as though the curtain were rising on a new act. But is there on that account any need to despair of happiness, and to sacrifice this art of life? I shall be told: "Yes, since happiness consists in progress. If we could begin with old age and end with youth, it would be charming; but our end is decay."

My answer will be: It is just a change of equilibrium, that is all; and in reality the question is not merely one of arithmetic. I call old, whoever feels the void within; and young, whoever has a reserve of enthusiasm. If we have been wise enough in youth to be a little old, that is, not to make too heavy demands upon our physical vitality, it is no merit in us men to have reached a ripe old age, and we do not lose very much: our heart's

youthfulness does but expand. With women it is not so simple a matter. At forty, some women take their courage in both hands and proceed to live as men do. How wrong they are! A few white hairs prevent no one, not even a woman, from attaining a charming and efficient philosophy. If we turn over the delicate leaves of our book of memory, perhaps the names most deeply graven there will not be the names of very young women! And on the other hand, we should vastly amaze some fair ladies not yet come to forty if we confessed that we find them old, because they have shrivelled souls, because they are weak, worn-out creatures of routine, and the springs of life in them seem parched. "O God, who rejoiceth my youth!" is still lisped by the aged priest who has not lost touch with enthusiasm and ideas. The women we prefer are, at bottom, those whom we respect. To respect what we love, and to enjoy with respect—that is always the art of the pure gourmet. He nurtures desire!

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

A MORAL PHARMACOPŒIA

> "It is not the eye that beholds the beauties of the heavens, nor the ear that hears the sweetness of music: it is the soul that gathers them, and enjoys all the perceptions of the senses and the intelligence. The nobler and more excellent is the soul, the greater and the more delicious will be its perceptions and, in consequence, its joys."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

THE few indications we have given will perhaps appear somewhat unfruitful, though unhappily their exactitude can be recognised by every one.

They lead to the conclusion that happiness in this world is subject to rude assault; desire ends in a dream of sensibility which neither soul nor body is strong enough to support; yet the idea of art is not destroyed, and sensibility still enters very largely even into the treatment of disease.

In treating a disease, the first requisite is to allay pain as much as possible, then to suppress the physical and moral nutriments of the disorder, and finally to repair the general vitality, in such a way as to restore the body to its normal equilibrium. In all these matters, if we carefully observe the

synthesis of the individual, we shall find that sensibility plays its part.

We all know that physical pain is lulled by anæsthetics, which suppress local sensibility, and sometimes the conscious personality itself. But there are no permanent anæsthetics. On the other hand, while we have no chloroform for moral pain, we have permanent anæsthetics of more or less efficacy. Consequently, in the actual state of science, little can be done for sorrow except to apply physical remedies with a view to immediate relief, and moral remedies for permanent recovery.

This arises in great measure from the difficulty and danger involved in trying to obliterate the moral sensibility, since this would be simply adding weakness to weakness. It is necessary to inflame, I had almost said to intoxicate, the moral sensibility in order to save it from itself. We must be so filled and occupied that no room is left for the impressions that are to be destroyed; impressions must be set in conflict, and against those that are painful must be let loose other impressions, if possible more violent still. And then the moral action can swamp even the physical nature.

A soldier is not conscious of his wound while the storm of battle rages.

There have been some ardent natures possessed

of the strength to act thus in cold blood upon themselves. The love of God has produced marvels among the martyrs. St. Francis of Assisi, according to the narrative of St. Bonaventure, smilingly submitted to a most painful operation, oblivious to suffering by virtue of his passionate love of God. The Duke of Urbino, Raphael's charming friend, supported himself in his last agony by reciting fine passages from Virgil.

It is quite clear that no reasoning can prevail over pain. Sensibility alone can mitigate it or help one to support it, so that one may formulate this aphorism: Blessed are those who know how to enjoy, because they know how to suffer!

This truth has recently been widely recognised, and in Russia and France a number of physiologists have conceived the idea of making practical use of music for giving physical and moral relief to certain sick persons. This is no new theory; it was known among the ancient Greeks and the ancient Mexicans; it flourished also during the whole course of the Middle Ages. St. Francis of Assisi, who is constantly available as an example, was sinking one day under the burden of a multiplicity of sufferings: it occurred to him to invoke music's aid "in rekindling joy in his soul." But his own rule forbade the enjoyment of music: on the night

following he fancied he heard the strains of angels' songs, and he returned to life.[1]

Memlinc, Carpaccio, and many another artist depict the martyrs sustained in their physical tribulations by a celestial music. The Duchess of Orleans, mother of Louis XII, when racked by the pains of travail, had her musicians stationed about her bed. No one but knows by experience how, in a time of anguish, a noble religious song brings true calm.

Not long ago the newspapers related that, after the wreck of the excursion steamboat *Stella*, a boat filled with passengers was adrift on the ocean in the night, without sails or oars. A lady had the idea and the courage to keep up her companions' spirits by singing sacred airs from the works of Mendelssohn.

The second step in the cure consists in suppressing whatever is permanent food for sorrow. On the moral side this is a veritable work of surgical restoration. It is necessary to attack and destroy the injured parts—the memory, the faculty of comparison. Instinct lends its aid: loss of memory (*amnesia*) is a natural consequence of the most violent emotions. Forgetfulness, ignorance of the future, seclusion — these are the starting-points for the re-creation, the re-birth of a creature.

[1] His *Life* by St. Bonaventure.

His whole being must be taken possession of as completely as possible, in such a way that his life is encompassed, sustained, re-formed, until the day when he is born again.

We have as yet no very sure method of administering forgetfulness. All that we know is that it is not right to kill the memory, nor even to put it too effectually to sleep, because a remembrance of the sorrow must remain in order to constitute happiness. "The state of redemption is a hundred times more precious than the state of innocence," was an excellent saying of St. Francis of Sales, not perhaps from the moral point of view, but certainly from the æsthetic standpoint, since happiness is born of progress. It is not right, then, to shatter the dolorous foundation of all life; what is necessary is, gradually to replace the sorrowful recollection by the idea of things loved, and not to lose sight of the fact that the right treatment of moral maladies is, in the end, as Dr. Briquet said, their cure—in other words, happiness. The past once detested, life is then begun afresh, according to the principles we have stated.

Of a thousand moral diseases, nine hundred and ninety-nine are characterised at bottom by a positivist condition of soul and a loss of illusion.

Step by step revive illusion, then love, then moral activity. By the agency of a few experiments in

spiritual massage and friction a little enthusiasm will be engendered.

This applies to maladies that are moral in origin.

In regard to moral maladies that have a physical origin, the moral treatment, though now subsidiary, still has its importance. Every one knows how essential it is to cheer the sick, to restore to them love of life, desire, hope, confidence.

In war twice as many wounded of the conquered army die as of the conquering army. A sick man who fancies himself cured is half way to recovery. Dr. Padioleau[1] relates the case of a lady who, though entirely cured, suffered a relapse when she learnt that she had been taken in by sham prescriptions. At Vichy, where the waters are indubitably of admirable strength, an old physician has often told me that the faith of his patients was one of his principal curative agents.

A shock may be necessary. A vivid emotion of love, joy, fear, transforms a sick person. Paralytics have been known to escape from a fire, invalids to regain health through the return of a loved one or success in a lawsuit: examples abound. A physician of Montpellier, M. de Beauchêne, in his book, *De l'Influence des affections de l'âme sur les maladies nerveuses des femmes*, published in 1781,

[1] *De la médecine morale dans le traitement des maladies nerveuses*, Paris, 1864.

mentions cases which strike us as very curious to-day: a Frenchwoman who suddenly came out of a cataleptic trance on hearing some one say that she might marry the man she loved; a Turkish woman who recovered because her doctor threatened her aloud with a physical operation then considered indecent; a lady suffering from hæmorrhage, to whom her doctor said brusquely, "Is that it? Come, then, I shall have to bleed you!" As the lady was a trifle ingenuous, the hæmorrhage ceased instantly.

By such means people have almost raised the dead! Remember that poor queen of England, who, given up by her physicians, was bidding a touching farewell to the king, her husband and lover: "At these words, she bedewed his hands with tears, which he thought her last. He clasped her hands, and, without dreaming that she might take him at his word, conjured her to live for love of him. Never had she disobeyed him; and, for all the danger attending sudden emotion when one is between life and death, the transport of joy, which was like to have been fatal, saved her; and this wonderful tenderness of the king had an effect for which not every one praised Heaven with equal fervour."[1]

At bottom the real infirmity of all these poor

[1] Hamilton.

people was a feebleness of will. Their will required a wholesome touch of the whip. Since they were cured by an emotion, it is reasonable to suppose that they might have cured themselves. But no; they were awaiting the stimulant of life—emotion.

Nothing, then, is so valuable, even for certain physical ailments, as the bracing of the moral sensibility.

Some people have great faith in work. Certainly work, both physical and mental, is a perfectly healthful occupation. Physical exercise clarifies the brain; and intellectual culture is wonderfully conducive to longevity, even conferring on the body a sort of immunity: "Take a negro wrestler, and the most languishing of the fashionable ladies of Paris, and expose them to the same contagion; it is on the negro that the bacillus of tuberculosis or the comma of cholera will pullulate."[1]

The valuable and delightful thing about work is that it develops a man's personal life, and insulates him. It is, as it were, a hospice in the midst of physical contagions, a fortress in the midst of moral degeneration. But to imagine that it is a universal cure would be vast presumption.

In states of fatigue or depression, states so common to-day, the need of activity sometimes answers to a sort of mechanical agitation, which it is much

[1] Dr. de Fleury.

better not to maintain. It would surely be doing a very bad turn to a feverish patient to give him a beefsteak instead of bark! And the precise drawback of pure reason, the clear proof of the impossibility of relying upon that alone, is that at the first assault of sorrow it refuses its aid, and leaves us alone with sensibility.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THROUGH SORROW TO LOVE

> "Love is never idle; but if it exists, it does great things; if, on the contrary, it refuses to act, it is no longer love."—ST. GREGORY.
>
> "A great thing is love if reduced to its principle, if traced back to its origin, if steeped once more in its source; and if it draws thence unceasingly all it needs, to flow on without interruption."—ST. BERNARD.

THIS malady was the beginning of my soul's restoration: "No man knows himself so long as he has not suffered!"[1] What value, I ask you, in the eyes of the man who will perhaps die in an hour, or the man who has just lost all that he loved—what value has the idea of his tailor, his interests, a hundred and one vanities? Thenceforward vanity is for ever shattered, but the heart does but blossom again and again. We become tender, and calm, and noble; passion resolves itself into tranquillity and gentleness; around us we see with clear eyes the worthlessness of things; the sentiment of a new life, a life of contemplation, defines itself. Sooner or later we are bound to die thus, in order to rise

[1] Alfred de Musset.

again. The frail vessel of our heart seems to be broken, but only to fill itself anew with a larger love, the love which is Charity. The flower fades, but only to become a double flower. Savonarola turned monk in consequence of a grave moral malady, a disappointment in love; and as Emilio Castelar tells us, "He believed that it was death to him, when in truth it was immortality."

Here am I now convalescent, filled with the tender joy that sorrow has produced. I feel all the more superior to fortune in that I am manifestly weaker; and why should I not raise a modest pæan when I see that this torch of life, still flickering, still fragile, is uplifted by a hand far more robust than mine?

Then, a sort of divine grace encompasses our re-birth with charm and joy. Not that fatigue or weakness becomes a good, but since our happiness is entirely a matter of comparison, of progress, there is a delicious zest in the consciousness of being born, and then advancing, and in preparing for future activity:

"Et l'on redevient doux de la toute-douceur!
La maladie est à ce point anémiante
Qu'on prend un air de première communiante,
Qu'on prend, au lieu de son cœur d'homme, un cœur de fleur,
Un cœur de nénuphar dans une ville morte. . ."[1]

[1] Rodenbach. ["And one becomes sweet again with the all-sweetness. Sickness thins the blood so far that one becomes like a young girl going to first communion—one loses one's heart of man for a heart of flower—a nenuphar in a dead city."]

Or rather the soul, but vapour still, floats and rises into the living ocean of heaven, carrying with it languidly the incense of our mortal dreams, and seeming to lose itself in the brightness ineffable.

In olden days, the workshop in which souls were repaired was not to be found merely in the hospital; they liked to have it in the full sunlight, upon a mountain peak, in some high monastery, a nest of thought, an impregnable fortress, a spiritual hospital, a smiling, sparkling place: Mont Cassino, La Cava, Mount Athos, Mont Saint-Michel—innumerable others, almost on every height. Our spiritual life, so easily shattered, had found for its restoration what we seek so laboriously, and what is really so simple: wealth of soul and poverty of body!—the flesh, not despised, but governed; the soul free!—the hair-shirt where we employ the flesh-brush and massage, prayer instead of the Turkish bath. And these remedies were effectual, being loved, loved with a permanent and perpetual suggestion. The result was, along with the adorable and perfect science of forgetfulness, steadfast serenity in the present, unflinching hope for the future!—a place in heaven instead of a numbered bed.

All that is closed to us, assuredly—destroyed, replaced. But none of it need be destroyed or replaced.

I chanced one morning to enter the church of

Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. The fane was dark; a few candles were smoking without giving light. Alone, in the deepening dusk, the marble profile of a Woman bearing her Son, a figure of the Eternal Motherhood, stood out almost timidly, a blurred outline, upon an altar. But throughout the entire church, the whole length of the walls, what hieroglyphics of life! A thousand ex-votos in letters of gold, some veiled and nameless, others, so to say, all smiles: Thanks for recovered health! Thanks for life! Thanks for success in an examination! Thanks for success in business! Strange glimmerings of prayer, terrestrial incense licking these mystic walls as did once the fumes of petroleum during the Commune! And, constantly, requests for health, for joy, for success in examinations!—learning, money itself, leaning upon faith. There still exists, then, a terrestrial confidence in happiness! What is it to the Immortals whether a son pass his examination, and enter Saint-Cyr or the Polytechnique? But so it is: here, between the Place de la Bourse and the Bourse du Commerce, people have positively dreamed of a Bourse of happiness. And what found I upon those walls, I who entered in fulness of life, yet a suppliant of love? An immense petition to God for power to do without Him? For if these people obtained what they so vehemently besought, if they passed their examinations

and entered at Saint-Cyr, or simply regained health and tranquillity, what need would they have of God? I hear the whispered answer: "This thirst for happiness is just God's call." Sorrow is necessary to desire, because 'tis needful it should rise to prayer. And then I saw very clearly, methought, the general scheme of the whole art of life.

The Platonists of old used to speak of two loves, or rather of two degrees of love—the terrestrial and the ideal, the prosaic and the poetic; the sensual, sprung of the primitive carnal connection, and the purified, the amalgamation of souls, the fruit of the spirit's travail. Art consists in passing from the one to the other; but more, it leads us to a third love, which is communion in the Universal. Sensualists, idealists, pure mystics alike only recognise one love, which they isolate from the others. In reality the human heart passes naturally through these three loves, almost as the water of a rill becomes a stream, then, uniting with another stream, becomes a river, and finally proceeds to its union with the sea.

Sorrow is a necessity to the third stage.

Sorrow is an evil! And yet it must be admitted that sorrow purifies terrestrial love, restores it to us; happiness would very readily become narrow, selfish, arrogant; it very rapidly forgets that love is born of participation, surrender, confession. Now, what confidence is more tender and profound than

that of grief? What hope more general? What sigh more profitably shared?

To suffer with one we love: that is really to possess him.

Victor Hugo has charmingly depicted the delight of a blind man in the company of a beloved woman, in catching the rustle of her dress, in feeling the necessity of her sweet presence. It is the world's higher law that a mother devote herself to her child, and that the child, on reaching manhood, devote himself then to his mother in her old age and feebleness. That is the rule for us: love having for its effect that, of two beings, one lends to the other his activity and vigour. A sick person in your arms is almost as a child. His affection for you becomes so pure that it may express itself tenderly. And you, his friend, refining your attachment till it becomes charity, suffer your heart to open, to dilate in delightful freedom, and to grow stronger. Love, in so far as it has anything eternal, blossoms out into this purification by devotion. A bed of suffering wears the aspect of an altar. The young sufferer, who gazes at us with trustful, loving eyes,—is she not as beautiful, and a thousand times more interesting, than the girl who frolics in a ball-room?

So likewise with the moral sufferings. There is an extraordinary charm in watching the develop-

ment of a soul one loves, and in entering into its existence. Edgar Allan Poe declares that he knew a child who assimilated the thoughts of people by projecting himself into them, that is, by imitating with his own features the expression of theirs. Thus it behoves us to act: "A soul does not observe itself from without, but from within: to know it, one must enter into it, identify oneself with it, penetrate it."[1]

To feel together, love together, suffer together, is sympathy, *συν-παθεῖν*. Darwin even holds that we weep more freely and more abundantly for others' sorrows than for our own.

The true formula of love is the supplication of the *Stabat Mater:* "Mother, fount of love, make me to feel thy grief, to weep with thee! Cause me to bear the death of Christ, to share His Passion, to remember His afflictions—that I may be wounded with His wounds, and embrace the Cross with rapture, for the love of Thy Son!" That is the supreme art: not to deny sorrow, not to be satisfied with soothing it, but to share it!

Happy, then, he who has the gift of winning confidences and partaking sorrows! How many even of physical ills may be cured simply by confessing them!

The physician comes, and observes a nervous

[1] M. Souriau.

condition, a capricious digestion, a disordered liver. Another physician comes, and notes the same symptoms, and all this evokes diagnoses more or less wide of the mark. At the Salpétrière, where so many hapless deranged folk are received, it is necessary to insist on confession. And as in these pitiful conditions the sick shrink from avowing the idea or the fact (however insignificant) which is subtly sapping their reason, recourse is sometimes had to hypnotic confession, during which the defenceless intellect answers almost automatically. Then to physical confession.

But only the confession that is a delight, voluntary, spontaneous, natural, is able to relieve; that alone consecrates between patient and healer the bond of affection and confidence which allows the synthesis of the malady to be established. When we truly love, we do not always picture the beloved one merely on his best sides; we want to find his feeble sides, which permit us to intervene in his life and assume part of his burden. And thus ripen the substantial affections, as fruit ripens on a tree with yellowing leaves, as the rose bursts forth among thorns, as the nightingale sings in a thicket. How many times, for instance, between a husband and wife who are divided, or at least indifferent, suffering thus creates the bond of pity, then of tenderness, whence their affection springs into new

life! And true love is indeed transfigured by affliction. Are you unfortunate? You will lose friends little to be regretted. But a real sentiment will grow up, and we may always question whether a love is stable till it has been sealed by tears, for it delights in trial. When all is going well it evaporates, fritters itself away; it dies of pleasure, but it lives on pain. And thereby it grows larger, and reveals itself as the prime necessity of life. If we enjoyed unbroken peace and tranquillity we might indeed refrain from love, but it is beyond our power to escape suffering, and then we are seized with an intense longing not to allow ourselves to be crushed by bitternesses, disappointments, anxieties, sorrows, a passion for combatting them with superior weapons. This is the gate of heaven.

The art of life has for its end the mingling of love with suffering.[1] Our life, alas! resembles a never-ending vintage. Pass on, O women, vintagers divine, to distil from us the alcohol, the spirit, the juice of the fruit, and to reject the seed! When we feel ourselves, so to speak, falling from the tree of life, then is the time for you to gather us, and transport us to that beautiful state of sorrow whence a purified life is born.

[1] Coleridge well describes his despondency on the day when he asks himself whether, if every one were rich and free, and pleasure were no longer heightened by struggle and privation, we should be happy, and is compelled to answer No.

"The soul that loves and suffers has reached sublimity."[1]

"Blessed are the poor in spirit!

"Blessed are those that mourn!

"Blessed are the meek!

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness!

"Blessed are the merciful!

"Blessed are the pure in heart!

"Blessed are the peacemakers!

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Blessed are the feeling hearts, even when they suffer!

[1] Victor Hugo.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE GARDEN OF ROSES AND THE VALE OF TEARS

"Life is only a bauble till disappointment makes it grave."—CHATEAUBRIAND.

I WILL venture to go further, and, addressing myself to women, take them to witness that sorrow itself may be lovely, that certain afflictions may be loved if they are felt to be fertile.

O women, we hold out towards you our soul and our strenuous hands! We have laboured and toiled: and lo! now we are worn and spent. Our heart alone remains young: extend to us your little hands. It is you that were born to suffer, and also to bring suffering, and also to console. You, in whom life's transformations are effected; you, guardians of our joys and their fruit; you, our undoing and our redemption—you represent the divinity of sorrow. Sorrow, for us, is a stern law: it makes us irritable and impatient. But you have the marvellous secret of a sorrow that is profitable, exquisite, maternal. Sorrow withers us: you it nurtures into fruitfulness. Our weakness is worthy of pity, yours is strong, or at least

creates your strength; we live for ourselves, and you for others; our honour is to act, yours to suffer. The whole world issues from your tears: you are, as it were, the swaddling-bands in which our weaknesses are eternally enveloped. You redeem us, because our weaknesses, physical and moral, are re-echoed in you. You are the sacrificial victims. You pay for all: for yourselves, your husbands, your children.

If you have an ailing child, your heart flies to him: his sufferings are specially your own. One must be happy and in want of nothing to escape your sweet affection. Your gentleness embraces even death, aye, even your own death: "Madame was gentle towards death."[1] One of your sex wrote to St. Francis of Sales that it mattered little to her to what 'seasoning' God put her. Vainly does the material life set its brands upon you, vainly does it strike you in the inmost defences of your flesh, trample on your feelings, subject you to painful infirmities and grievous servitudes: you blossom on this dunghill! Your serenity still prevails over this woeful state. And it seems to you even that your lamp burns ever the brighter as it consumes all that once you were. "I early felt the need women have of being reasonable," said Madame de

[1] [Bossuet's saying of Henrietta of England, wife of Louis XIV's brother.]

Lambert. What a hard saying! yet how profound! Reclining on your long chairs, you live on ideas. Limbs you have no longer, but you still have wings! Your heart has glories which no scalpel will ever touch, lights which no human hand will ever extinguish! "To endure tribulations is strength; to rejoice in them is wisdom."[1]

And thus it comes to pass that out of sorrow itself you make an art, for you grow to love it for what it wins you; you run to it, as to a providence. In the cruel pangs of motherhood you sometimes cry that you "will never endure it again," and you endure it again continually! Fate handles you with clumsy fingers, and yet sorrow brings you back to your joys. "He that hath not suffered knows not love."[2] And, in truth, woe to the women whom we know only through pleasure! Without sorrow, we should not respect them; the dream and the reality would be ever far apart; they would be neither our mothers, nor our wives, nor our dear true friends. Whereas, knowing how to suffer, having the gift of tears, you weep indeed with those that weep, you know how to comfort. Your instinct reveals itself in your talent for regaining, through the sorrow of others, pity and loving-kindness, those primitive forms of love!

[1] St. Bernard. [2] *Imitation of Christ.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

"EVERY LIFE HAS ITS ROMANCE AND ITS HISTORY"

"Beauté sainte, Idéal qui germes
Chez les souffrants,
Toi par qui les esprits sont fermes
Et les cœurs grands!"
—VICTOR HUGO.

"He that loveth much is filled with God."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

"Infinite love is the source of the slightest act of love, and, when we love with all our strength, we are in God and united with God."—ISAAC HECKER.

"It is with the natural virtues that the supernatural virtues are created."—ARCHBISHOP IRELAND.

IF love is the substance of life, and if our happiness consists in continual progress towards life, the happiness which we are to create for ourselves when we leave affliction behind us will consist in finally imbuing life with love—love vast, imperishable, inexhaustible; in other words, in dropping into the natural human love a grain of the Absolute and Ideal, a love stronger than material existence—that seed of liberty and grace which M. Fouillée has so well denominated "an anticipation of future liberty." Just as in the primary state there is

[1] Father Gratry.

scarcely any mean between enthusiasm and drunkenness, so here there is almost no mean between suicide and confidence in God.

We need a future life, because without that life we cannot really live, because our ideas of happiness ultimately relate to an existence we do not possess, and because we have to defer to a vague to-morrow a good number of our spiritual needs.

This is not a theory; it is a truth of experience. All writers, without exception, acknowledge that life is but a sorry thing without faith in an ideal. I do not appeal, as I need hardly say, to the testimony of Christians such as Bossuet or Fénelon, or of quasi-Christians like M. Renan; but to that of M. Auguste Comte, according to whom "the higher rules the lower," and of M. Emile Zola, when he rightly explains to the youth of our colleges that Positivism too narrowly restricts the horizon, since it stops short at material truths.

Statesmen of unimpeachable good faith have proclaimed the necessity of a supreme love as a staff of comfort in the struggles of existence, and as an element of moral superiority.[1] The last word of human vitality is to love the higher interests,[2] and to love them with such force, such

[1] "To have an ideal is to have a reason for living." (M. Léon Bourgeois, speech at the *Grand Concours*, 1891.) M. Luzzati, eulogy of Mr. Gladstone at the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

[2] St. Augustine.

absolute infatuation, "that we can love nothing apart from what we love indeed and in truth."[1] Possessing that secret, death itself comes to have no meaning.

If the Ideal were a chimera, we should have to invent it. But the truest reality is thought, and the Ideal and thought are intimately interwoven, since desire is an element of happiness. Our sentiments are constantly moving upon a lofty ladder, like the ladder of Jacob's dream: they ascend and descend, uniting us uninterruptedly with a great elusive mystery. Reason may recoil before this mystery, and deny it because it eludes its grasp; but sensibility fills our soul with it, and, adopting a fine phrase of Claude Bernard's, it teaches us "to rock to the wind of the unknown in the sublimities of ignorance." Every soul has, so to say, mysterious pores, which are a pledge of life, because by them it breathes and aërifies itself: it is like the window of an attic, commanding an immense horizon which the eye fails to grasp: why should the inhabitant of the attic make it a point of honour to live without breathing, under the pretext that he knows not whence comes the air; or without looking at anything, under the pretext that he cannot see everything, nor read the riddle of what he does see?

[1] St. Bonaventure, *Itinerary of the Soul to God.*

The sky that you perceive does not depend on you, it is true; but it does not destroy your life: on the contrary, it overarches and nourishes it. Love of the ideal does not destroy the kindly sentiments; it enhances them, nourishes them, elevates them. "To love oneself is to desire one's happiness; to love oneself is to love God," said St. Augustine. A woman of high intelligence, the Marquise de Lambert, has exquisitely interpreted this philosophy: "Nothing makes more for happiness than to have the mind persuaded and the heart touched. . . . The heart is the source, and God the end, of all." Sentiment shines forth in our resplendent night like an unwearying star. That so many lives are drifting at the mercy of chance, so many men sailing without compass, reckless in joy, without strength in sorrow, is because they do not fix their eyes on the star. That is what Michelet, full of faith in human progress, meant when he wrote that some day "the world would be swept away in one breath from God."

Finally, every great human love has a divine character, by virtue of which it renders a man a superior, invincible being. It corresponds to the character of the Christian religion, which is, not to annihilate, but to preserve, to govern, to guide, and to develop our faculties. Man rules human things without suffering himself to be defiled. That is the

law and the prophets ;[1] and in a word, "all is good to those that love God."[2]

The heart becomes stable and steadfast; work, quietly and lovingly done, becomes a consecration. "Stay me with flowers," said the *Song of Songs* long ago, "comfort me with sweet-scented fruits." The idea of God is indeed the object "on which all love centres,"[3] the absolute beauty which informs things only by the love with which it endues them ;[4] the origin and the end of the love we bestow upon our fellow-creatures or receive from them; the ideal of love, "persuasive rather than commanding."[5]

How infinite the force of a sublime vision which, showing us things as they are, and casting into the shade all that should take second rank, clothes with a golden tissue the realities of life, and inspires us with courage, strength, ardour, enthusiasm! 'Tis this vision, this romance of life, that I call ideal.

[1] St. Matthew xxii. 37–40; St. Mark xii. 30.
[2] Bossuet. [3] Ribot. [4] Plato, Aristotle, and others.
[5] M. Fouillée.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

MAMMON, OR LIFE?

> "Avoid overloading the stomach, which may excite concupiscence."—ST. BERNARD, *Sermon* 65.
>
> "Poverty, thou great monarch, thou hast the world in thy power, for thou dost hold sovereign sway of all the good things thou despisest.
>
> "Poverty, thou science profound!—scorning riches, the will in humbling itself rises an equal height towards liberty.
>
> "Gracious poverty, ever in opulence and joy."—JACOPONE DA TODI.
>
> "Life is like unto a deep river. Those who bear no burden get safe across. Those who lade their shoulders are drowned."—*Little Flowers of St. Francis.*
>
> "It is a fatal blunder in the lives of most of our contemporaries to believe that the more a man has, the more he enjoys. Our external liberties as citizens are constantly increasing; but our internal liberties depart at the same rate: how many people there are who are literally possessed by their possessions!"—PAUL SABATIER, *St. Francis of Assisi.*

ARE we, then, to lose ourselves in the clouds, and neglect life, or, let us say, the money which is its instrument?

Assuredly not. Money in itself is nothing, but

it is worth just as much as the life in whose service it is employed. I do not think that mishap has any more respect for the lord in his sleeping-car than for the stoker on the engine or the plate-layer on the line. But still, poverty is not a blessing, and Christ Himself took pity on the people whose wine ran short on the wedding-day.

Money is good, then, if it is the mintage of love, and not of parasitism; if it does not hinder an officer from going to his death, or a priest from self-devotion; if it be a servant. But if it commands, if we love it and are proud of it, if we believe that all things are its due and that it owes nothing, if it fosters presumption, arrogance, and insolence, if it sunders men into separate cities and quarters, then it merits the hatred it excites.

Hail poverty; and wealth, hail! Blessings on whatever lives and has a reason for its being! Blessings on the shepherd who is a friend to his flock, and the flock which is a friend to its shepherd! Blessings on captain and private both, since together they love the same thing: their native land! But every truly Christian soul will have the aristocratic ambition to figure in life in its own raiment, and not in borrowed plumes.

Money to-day shows a tyrannous aspect. It is the sole effective force. In all ages its incivilities have been the same; but nowadays we have

removed the check formerly supplied by manners and ideas.

Interest warps everything; and not merely the sensibility, but also, and with peculiar force, the spirit of justice and fair-dealing. Certainly, I am not a Socialist; the Socialism of to-day appears to me a counter-appetite, rather than a counter-poise; nay more, I firmly believe that individualism is the absolute basis of life. But when we have a livelihood, we ought to think ourselves happy, look higher, towards the universal, and give our life a nobler aim. We all of us overload our stomachs. We digest too much, and do not breathe enough. That is the gross blunder to correct. There will always be great fortunes which fulfil a social office: nevertheless, from the artistic point of view, it would perhaps be advisable to endeavour to keep them, as a social trust, as much as possible in hands traditionally habituated to manage them without allowing themselves to be crushed. It is good for us to see some one living higher than money and the tariffs of life.

We have no lack of money, but we do lack men who know how to use it and to justify their possession of it. Really, the queens of our time, the heiresses, ought, when buying their husband, to require evidence that he is a man, worthy of his poverty, and consequently of their wealth!

Let us love money, that is, love him who produces it. Let us love the men who toil for their living—love them, not out of pity, or as a duty, but with real esteem, because they are in very truth men. Let us forgive them our good luck! Their life, in truth, is not complex! Necessity alone has harassed them, and that lends gravity to the soul. Want, haunting their bedside, has often sapped their vigour, destroyed their courage, sunk them in the quagmire of materialities. Where could they find refuge save in themselves? And if they err, if they are sick and weary, it is still from their own life that they draw the strength to rise and press on. Ah! necessity is a wonderful school![1] It is thither that we have to carry love, pardon, hope. But how could one respect a rich man whose whole thought was of increasing his pile, and whose every action was devised to that end?

[1] "Behold me! I have no country, no house, no goods, no slaves; I sleep on the bare earth; I have no wife, no children, no means, but only the earth and the sky and one poor cloak. And what want I more? Am I not without sorrow? Am I not without fear? Am I not free? When didst thou see me fail of reaching the object of my desire, or fall into that which I would fain have shunned? Have I ever reproached God or men? Have I ever accused any man? Have I ever a gloomy look? . . . Who is there, but, seeing me, thinks he beholds his lord and master?"—EPICTETUS.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

"HITCH YOUR WAGGON TO A STAR"[1]

"Christ did not come to destroy, but to perfect what is in man: the truths and graces of Revelation tend not less directly to the elevation of the present life than to the attainment of the future life."—ARCHBISHOP IRELAND.

"The sweetness of Thy creatures hath beguiled my taste, and I did not perceive that Thy sweetness is more delicious than honey. It is Thou who hast given to honey and to every creature the sweetness proper to them, or rather it is Thou who hast lent it them. The sweetness of Thy creatures, considered as it behoves, invites us to come nearer to Thy eternal sweetness, O Jesus, source of all sweetness and of all love!"—ST. BONAVENTURE, *Soliloquy*.

"I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and there came to me a spirit of wisdom."—*The Wisdom of Solomon*.

THE work of Christianity has been to crown life with a sentimental worship. It instituted that last pathetic dialogue: "Lovest thou Me more than these?" "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." And a second time: "Simon, son of Jonas,

[1] Emerson.

lovest thou Me?" And yet a third time; and the answer came: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and Peter was almost beside himself to hear the question thus repeated, for a person one loves can hardly be ignorant of it. And soon after, Peter betrayed Him; but Christ loved even unto death. That is the philosophic epitome of life.

Life is its own corrective. Reason does not give us happiness. Sensibility shows us a glimpse of it, but, even carried to its highest power, cannot secure it as a permanent possession. Pain and death teach us that all things pass away—all perishable things perish; and even in our hours of joy we are troubled by forebodings. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth."

Our happiness depends on others—depends on too many things! A day comes when it fades away. And then God (though we have abolished Him) resumes His governance of us, because, having known the thirst for a firm and stable sentiment, we recognise in the divine will the true nourishment, the true remedy, the only living ideal, the love with which we imagined we had filled the life of the world, and which only existed in us.

Let us, then, have the wisdom and docility to cherish, without any subtlety,[1] a great love for God.[2] I say "without subtlety": it is the honour of our age that reason comes unconstrainedly to the support of our beliefs; but, here, only consolation, peace of mind, and forgiveness are in question. Philosophers, theologians, historians, will discuss the problems: that is their duty; but along with this science there is an art, a gentle unassuming art, a woman's art, all naïveté and candour, which consists in loving God, in imbuing with this love the simplest hearts, in glorifying the poor in spirit, in offering to men a hand dipped in holy water, in smiling upon them. It is so much easier to feel the necessary truths than to understand them! Let us argue as little as possible, since man, though he cannot live without love, can live very well without argument. Even if certain parasitic legends disfigure the theological tree, what does it matter when our quest is for the fruit? We shall be taught that this or that saint never existed, that he lived in this age and not in that, that Madeleine never appeared in Provence, that René was never bishop of Angers. There are devotees, enthusiasts, dreamers, if you will, to whom all that is of no importance, so long as they find something to stir their enthusiasm. They would rather love a non-existent saint than an

[1] Madame de Chantal. [2] Jean Pérès, *L'art et le réel.*

empty niche, because the saint is themselves, the incarnation and sanctification of the deepest needs of their hearts.

"But," I shall be told, "this resolves itself into a feminine paganism, into what St. Francis of Sales used to call the childish follies of imagination, the science of hair-splitting: it hangs everything upon the cassock of Father X or Father Y."

God forbid! Heaven save us from certain modes of piety! But, as you know, in France there exist two religions, just as there are two politics (for all the visible movements are governed by hidden springs, the masses are led through subterranean passages). Some men do the talking, others the acting, and in practice it is often, as Mill said, "the hour of women," owing to the fact that, beneath the scepticism we find it politic to assume, we are all at heart pursuing an ideal. A hundred years ago it was Athens, Rome, the *Génie du Christianisme*.[1] Now it is an army, a general, a foreign sovereign. Could we not contrive that women should take our religion in hand, at any rate in its externals, so as to broaden and beautify its ritual? After all, true religion is not an element of strife or controversy; it is that which tames the fierce, calms the impatient, consoles the unhappy, makes the avaricious generous, the turbulent peaceable, the lost

[1] [Chateaubriand's famous work.]

happy. One can accept a ready-made creed, and find joy in it.

I know that most generous efforts are being made to satisfy us otherwise. People are toiling to create a popular art. Our streets already, despite the multitude of tram-cars, are swarming with celebrated men and naked women. But what can be a popular art except the art of giving brightness to the actual life of the people by sincere and simple means ?

Society at the present day has an essentially dramatic spirit. Yet the imagination of a country is not satisfied with the shows at a fair, nor even with the legs of young ladies on a larger stage. These give a momentary pleasure, but the people need a more serious *leit-motif* to penetrate their dreary life with a note of beauty and order and the absolute. Such inspiration is needful even on the benches of a school; then, whether the schoolboy become a poor hind or a prosperous farmer, his life in its gravest interests must knit itself into the universal; a moral electricity must illumine, however faintly, the great facts,—death, marriage, birth.

Stay, are we not all, to this degree, of the masses ? Do we not need, before we can attain to a perfect endurance of life, to lose the notion of time and finitude, to enter, we too, into the universal and the

eternal, like this fine motet or that fine picture, which have no age, since they live and touch men always? Is it not precisely this that conditions our actions and our health? Perhaps we should have better digestions if some beautiful grace, beautifully pronounced, gave to our dinners something of dignity and calm! This is what the popes so well understood when they dreamed of making Rome the æsthetic capital of the world. Some of them may have pushed the idea too far; still, they did build St. Peter's.

Women might render us immense assistance in our struggle against the forces of barbarism, merely by insisting on the need for the ideal. We hold too cheap the refinements and elegances of life. At our present rate, it will not be long before none but the clergy in France receive any culture in the 'humanities,' or have a thought for anything but commerce or colonisation.

Everything points to women as the ministers of the religion of sentiment and beauty; they are moved by the ideal and attracted by the ultimate mystery of things. In the fifteenth century, in the remotest depths of the most rural part of France, the ribald Villon shows us a good woman to whom, every Sunday, a certain fresco, representing Paradise and Hell, gave a thrill of *paour*[1] or of *joye et liesse*.[2]

[1] [Terror.] [2] [Joy and mirth.]

This fresco touched the poor old creature to the quick; she imbibed, as it were, its very marrow; the church in those days seemed a drawing-room, where everybody, whole or sick, merry or sad, found the perception of the beautiful. Those, too, were the days when they would carry the monstrance out into the open air, into the sunny harvest fields, a procession of splendid vestments, chaunts, psalms, ideas — communion between earth and heaven. We may say what we will; call it irrational, senseless, childish, this processional circuit of the fields; but it was useful, and probably is useful still.

"To gaze into the heavens is an achievement. . . . Unreflecting, hasty minds say: 'What avail these immobile faces to pierce the mystery? What end do they serve? What do they accomplish? Alas! in presence of the obscurity that compasses us about and looms upon our path, ignorant as we are of what the great upheaval will make of us, we answer: 'There is perhaps no sublimer work than that which these souls are doing.' And we add: 'There is perhaps no toil more useful.'"[1]

Useful? To whom? First of all, to themselves. Look at these women carrying banners; some are plain, sickly, visibly tried by existence, others in all the fulness of youth and innocence. Well, but

[1] Victor Hugo.

if we see on these faces one ray of concentrated joy, one flash of life, it proves the existence there of an impressionism useful, even beside the Moulin-Rouge. There is here something more than theatricality.

Again, useful to whom? Even to us who fancy we are laughing! In a charming analysis of *La Tristesse contemporaine*, M. Fiérens-Gevaert describes the singular emotion he experienced, sceptic as he is, and pessimistic, but an artist, when one day, by the strangest of chances, he entered a church where a number of girls were being catechised. He had sought everywhere for a fresh sensation of moral serenity, and he found it here, without seeking for it, during the singing of a simple hymn. Perhaps we no longer have spirits primitive enough to enjoy these unforced impressions. So much the worse. But we should always have one hour of sacred music during the week, to ventilate our thoughts.

Ah no! it was not an absolutely foolish thing to place our life, as did our forefathers, under the ægis of a sentimental worship, an ideal of womanhood, a Virgin Mother, at once perfect maid and perfect mother, and to inscribe on our altars the maxims of the æsthetes, the Platonists, the Christians of the Renaissance: "To love is to know!"[1]

[1] Trithemius.

"Love is the first and the chief cause of our salvation."[1] For that worship existed all the flowers, the enthusiasms, the haunting melodies, the precious reliquaries, and the vast cathedrals; it was the sweetness, the early blossom of the world. The gravest voices celebrated love as the crown of life. "O happy day," said one to the faithful soul, "when Mary, the Mother of the Lord, shall come to meet thee, surrounded by a choir of virgins, and the Bridegroom Himself shall approach thee with all His saints, and shall say: '*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*' Then will the angels behold thy glory with amazement, and will say among themselves: '*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?*' The daughters of Zion shall see it and show forth thy praise. The hundred and forty and four thousand blessed ones who stand always before the throne and the four and twenty elders shall take their harps and sing a new song. Then thou shalt cast thyself without fear into the arms of the Bridegroom, and shalt cry with exceeding joy: '*I have found him whom my soul loveth; I hold him and will not let him go.*'"[2] That, dear ladies,

[1] Sadolet.

[2] This passage, with its quotations from the *Song of Solomon*, is taken from St. Bonaventure's *Soliloquy*.

should be the goal of your lives, according to the Christians.

It was for this that you were consecrated by Christ Himself. He yearned to draw us to love. Over and over again in the course of His wandering life He is seen laying upon you His joys and sorrows. He delights in receiving your hospitality; He heals your diseases, sympathises with your griefs, absolves your hearts; He loves her who anoints Him with her perfumes; He is with her who has lost a piece of silver. While men believe Him still in the tomb, lo! a woman meets at the gate of a mysterious garden One whose heart is not dead, and who brings her joy. It seems ('tis St. Augustine's assertion) that Christ always had faithful women to help Him, and when His Apostles set out for the conquest of the world, again it was you women who went before them. Your hearts were their escort, and your hands served them. And then again, throughout the long series of the great ages of religion, every time a lofty figure appears, a redeemer or tamer of the people, the figure is double: man and woman, head and heart; St. Francis of Assisi and Claire, Jeanne de Chantal and St. Francis of Sales, and how many more in this triumphant litany of divine love: one might almost repeat Fénelon's saying, that Adam's sin was in truth necessary to the divine order!

So continue ye ! Preserve for us the beauty of the world !

We sometimes lose ourselves in our need of beauty and of illusion.

> " Nous sommes les flocons de la neige éternelle
> Dans l'éternelle obscurité." [1]

A shadow wraps us round, an immense shadow, the shadow of ourselves, and vainly do we lift our eyes towards the sombre depths of heaven. You show us the light : verily it is through you that the heart of the Most High speaks to us.

Bring out all that is divine in our existence, and teach us to forget the rest. Thus we do after a journey : we forget its vexations, and joyfully recall its pleasant hours. The artist whose eye searches a landscape makes its poetry articulate ; he selects, mayhap heightens, certain delicate features, and ignores the rest. Such is the religious art.

Life has its honey, its sweetness. To draw out the steadfast activity yielded by purity of conviction [2] and ideal emotion [3]—that is the grand work ! Mysticism is not here in question : we are neither angels nor brutes : we have only to mount upwards by natural paths till we reach that glorious summit where we believe in God,

[1] Victor Hugo. ["We are flakes of eternal snow in eternal darkness."]
[2] Le Play. [3] Alexander Bain.

and where the future is not dreaded but hoped for —like the bird

> "Qui sent ployer la branche et qui chante pourtant,
> Sachant qu'il a des ailes."[1]

So much the better if happiness leads on to greater happiness, love to love.[2] But if you encounter pain or sacrifice, passion indeed will give you wings. It is thus that all heroisms are explained: the smile of the dying mother to her new-born child, the cheer of the dying soldier for his flag, deaths on other fields, and certain lives more terrible than death.

[1] ["Which feels the branch swaying, and yet sings on, knowing that it has wings."]

[2] "Do you not think that a heart in which the faculty of love had been cultivated and guided in Christian ways would thereby be the better disposed to rise from the human but sacred affections to the supreme Love, which is God?"—DUPANLOUP.

In support of this sentence many instances might be adduced. Let us content ourselves with one, the admirable *Récit d'une sœur* of Madame Craven. In quite another direction we may mention the letter written from her prison by Madame Roland to Buzot, whom she loved: "I will not say that I went to meet my persecutors; but it is true that I did not avoid them."—O. GRÉARD.

CONCLUSION

> "A man simple and pure comes to thee at his heart's behest : 'tis thy saviour."—WAGNER : *Parsifal.*
>
> "Blessed is the woman who can say, with Job, 'I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.'"

I DO not claim, in this little book, to have discovered a new world, nor to have sketched a picture of women's influence the realisation of which is either impossible or even difficult. I have only analysed a number of simple facts, of almost daily occurrence. We see the fruits of reason and those of sensibility succeeding each other in our life almost as unvaryingly as the seasons, as regularly as day and night. Starting itself from reason, the world is perpetually giving birth to love, desire. We men bear the burden of reason ; 'tis woman, the handmaid of sensibility, laden eternally with the joys and sorrows of mankind, who accomplishes her mission in building up happiness for us. If I may hazard the metaphor, man digests, woman breathes. That is the substance of my reflections.

It remains only to insist on this point—that the fulfilment of their mission is for women the surest means of establishing their own happiness.

This empire of sensibility, in which they are to reign, is of immense, almost boundless extent; it comprehends all that adorns life, all that touches man, from the painting of his house to the loftiest speculations in metaphysic; from the art of personal happiness, which is the principal thing, to the social art. It is, in short, the religion of beauty and the art of its ritual. If there is anywhere a land that is led by reason, that land cuts itself adrift from woman's empire; but wherever gentleness and loving-kindness have any influence, the women have to organise, each in her own sphere, the worship of the Ideal, and to infuse love into the common affairs of life, especially those that are dreary.

No wonder that some women flinch from a task so vast. Physical maternity, indeed, seems to them a quite natural function; but when we speak to them of a moral maternity, they wonderingly protest, sometimes fearing that to conceive and bear ideas is too heavy a responsibility, and apparently not very sure how the thing is to be done.

And yet, even assuming that all women attain to it, physical maternity soon ceases; whereas moral maternity knows neither age nor limitations.

Old and young, married and unmarried, rich and poor, you women have to strengthen your own hearts by nourishing the hearts of others. And this mission, it may be said, implies a real privilege. Do you really believe that all men find it a delightful thing to remain in the imminent deadly breach, armed cap-à-pie against their neighbours, lest they be vilified, tricked, robbed, tormented, devoured? We are not allowed to live in quietness; if there be near us a being who is inferior to us, he is sure to charge us with responsibility for his inferiority. He would receive with laughter and scorn any talk about the ideal. And as to you, I do not say that you are above all attack; but I do say that (unless you turn men) you are encompassed by a sort of truce of God; you are exempt from the virile service of hate; in general, you are under no compulsion to fight for money, or power, or fame; you have the right, almost the duty, of setting up your rest in the sphere of beauty; your exquisite part is to love. Tell me, is this a thing to lament?

Nay, this moral maternity, when once it has been tasted, is found to be so full of charm, that noble women of the past were beset, I think, like their sisters in the Scriptures, by the temptation to leave gladly to subordinates, to servants, the physical

operations of motherhood; but they never believed that they had reached the limit of their moral motherhood, their giving birth to ideas through love. Needless to say, we do not beseech and urge you to go that length; but if those ladies had wit and spirit, you have quite as much, and the joys they tasted you might have also.

You do not know how to set about the task? Yet it is not difficult. Can you no longer find beings who are yearning for life? Throughout the wide world are there no more luckless, unhappy people — outcasts, criminals, men crushed and spent? Has strife vanished from the earth? Have men ceased to feel the urgent necessity of making life a pleasant and lovely thing?

Cries of hatred assail your ears: do not stop to ask if these wailful sorrows are merited or not. Deliberately impress upon yourselves the fact that ingratitude will be your reward; and *be* love, not for the thankless, but for yourselves, since love is the reason of your existence, the secret of your personal happiness, something you can never do without. Who knows?—perhaps in time loving-kindness may become one of your accomplishments. Nothing is lost in this world: the sweet perfume of good deeds floats in the atmosphere, and some one will surely come and sip of this honey. Moreover,

time is so fleeting. At certain hours, when those who seem the faithful followers of the wise man deny him and plot against him, love alone subsists. Though they had paid to Christ no vows of fidelity, was it not women who, when men forsook Him and fled, had the sublime folly to love their Lord boldly even unto the end?

Be love, for your own sakes, the sake of your happiness, of assuring your existence. For the maternal instinct is so perfect in you that, if life made no response to it, you would be as aimless wanderers in a wilderness. Something would be wanting to the world, but you would find that still more was wanting in yourselves. You are not entirely happy, Madam! . . . And all this gloom and dreariness, this long train of moral ailments, anæmias, gastric disorders, which afflict so many of your sisters, body and soul—do not they arise mainly from the fact that women are an army of the unemployed? No one understands them, no one gives them the serious attention they would like; they lack moral stamina, and endure the brutalities of life without becoming reconciled to them. It would be a huge mistake to believe that this is a chimera of the imagination: their whole being witnesses to the reality of the evil.

Let me sum up the whole matter by a simple observation drawn from hospital experience.[1] A lady, whose married life was unhappy, was subject to attacks of nervous irritability and mental derangement, coupled with trouble of the digestive and respiratory organs. At the hospital she was cured by being set to attend another patient. She was sick for want of some object of devotion, because she could not love, because only the 'animal' was required of her. She knew nothing of a mind at rest, a soul exempt from the trivial; and in truth she was not aware of her deficiency, having neither refinement nor delicacy. In devoting herself to another, she recovered her balance. Of her own accord she offered to go from time to time to see her husband. She could thus give herself completely, without anything having to suffer. She was alive.

That is why we can bid you to be mothers and to live. Try as you may to act otherwise, you will never rid yourselves of your heart. You have in you a mine of sensibility which none will ever succeed in exhausting. Use it, then, in your own interest. In your social vocation you have exercised a social, a collective charity. For yourselves, exercise personal charity. Be passion-

[1] M. Paul Janet.

ately, blindly, charitable, since your life, your happiness, are at stake : consecrate yourselves personally to well-doing under all its forms, even in the life of the world : there will always be around you innumerable poverties, physical or moral ; be angels of love, even if, considering the fragility of affection's bonds, you should come to look from perhaps too lofty a height upon the incivilities of daily existence.

Where should the ideal find anchorage if not in the heart of women ?

If the Commissioner of Police is not acquainted with all the wrong-doers, happily he is very far from knowing all the Sisters of Mercy.

And we, if we meet with these elect creatures whose feet do not touch earth, who flit by as in a sunbeam, let us not hale them back to life : let us rather conspire to keep them in ignorance that there are infamous men, that at all events no one is perfect, that nothing is absolutely desirable, that all our strivings evaporate in results that are hardly worth the pains they cost. They accomplish a divine dream. They believe in a higher hope, since this hope is necessary. They embody the true divine law, that bids them shut their eyes to evil, to love all things with a splendid injustice, to respond to human harshness only with the gift of

themselves, to cause flowers of grace and redemption to spring up beneath their feet, to permit us to live and to find something beautiful everywhere.

By this faith, by this confidence, you will set your affections above the assaults of the vulgar.[1]

From this present time, that fleets so rapidly away, you will derive a life full of ideal events and emotions of the utmost durability. You will stir within us, all and sundry, a passionate love for one thing, the Unique and the Eternal. Above the necessary, the useful, you will glorify sensibility. In trial as in joy, if we are to extend and replenish our life, we must find ourselves again and again near the object of our love; and as the earthly affections are never very numerous, or very passionate, nor are they immortal, it is for you to blend with them an ideal love, a savour of indestructibility and tenderness, so that sensibility may resolutely fulfil its office and yield strength and reason ever as its fruits. And this is but to say that the joy of this world is to fill by aid of enthusiasm the voids life makes in the heart; to consecrate oneself, to love, to believe; it

[1] "In your estate," said St. Vincent de Paul to the first Daughters of Charity, "you make profession of giving your life for the love of God and the service of your neighbour. Is there any deed of love surpassing that? After that can you love any other thing but your vocation, and will you not increase in this love ever more and more?"

is hope and love springing from a living faith in God.

Happiness is a temporal love, having eternal roots; a love that finds that which it seeks, and can still hope for that which it possesses.

THE END

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